

SHORT STORIES 1

READING AGES 10 - 16 YEARS



Hilton Ayrey

SCHOOL SITE LICENCE

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SHORT STORIES 1

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HANDY RESOURCES

literacy tools for the busy classroom teacher

This resource provides you with the following **four handy literacy tools** to take the stress out of your reading programme.



SHORT STORIES for FLUENT READERS

High quality, high interest stories for RA 10-16 years

- ♦ Short stories - ideal for a 20 to 30 minute reading lesson
- ♦ One page for ease of photocopying
- ♦ Perfect models for your student's own story writing

See the example on the next page



COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

A proven process for teaching comprehension

- ♦ A simple routine that is easy to understand and implement
- ♦ Students get explicit instruction in the use of strategies
- ♦ Video tutorials available from www.sharpreading.com

Further details see page 5



LESSON PLANS

Time savers for the teacher

- ♦ All the steps you need for each story - annotated text
- ♦ Learning outcomes and success criteria to choose from
- ♦ Detailed analysis of the story at your finger tips

Further details see page 7



FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES using Bloom's Taxonomy **Independent activities to develop high level thinking**

- ♦ All the hard work has been done for you
- ♦ High value activities - very motivating - not busy work
- ♦ An organisational necessity for your reading programme

Further details see page 9



SHORT STORIES

Here is an example ...

There's Nothing Like A Good Book

Every year Paul and his mum and dad went to stay with his grandmother and aunty for the first two weeks of their holiday. Because they lived a long way away, and didn't see each other very often, his mother spent all her time talking to Grandma and drinking cups of tea. Paul's father was very tired and spent most of the time sleeping.

Paul was a very active boy with a vivid imagination and this dreary adult lifestyle didn't suit him well. And then there was Aunty Ena. She had fallen off a horse when she was little, injured her back and had spent a lifetime in a wheelchair. Now she spent all day following Paul around nagging him with "Be careful! Be careful!" in her shrill, aunty voice if he tried to do anything that was slightly adventurous.

It was the middle of the fly season and Paul used up a morning by contracting out his services to Grandma to hunt down flies with a fly swot. But after 127 kills, there were too many stains on the wallpaper and Aunty Ena was having a nervous breakdown.

Early one morning, while everyone was still sleeping, Paul tackled the challenge of 'rock climbing' his way around the living room without touching the carpet. This was a difficult assignment as Grandma had lots of fussy little ornaments perched on the mantelpiece and on her china cabinets, all of which had to be carefully negotiated by the intrepid explorer. He had almost completed the traverse when a poor choice of foothold sent a china baby Jesus to its doom on the fireplace hearth. The whirl of Aunty Ena's wheelchair in the hallway prompted a quick decision to call it quits and head outside to see if he could find something else to do far away from the prying eyes of the safety police.

It was then that he noticed Priscilla, the neighbour's cat, asleep in the sun. Now Paul was not a boy who was normally unkind to animals, but his circumstances were pushing him to the limit and Priscilla was such a wimp. Her owner treated her like a baby. She had a nice soft blanket to lie on out in the sun, the very best gourmet cat food every day, and hours were spent grooming her long fluffy hair.

Paul planned his attack. He could have gone for total annihilation but settled for shock and stun. There was a spray gun attached to the hose, so he turned the tap on full and very carefully wriggled over to the hedge that separated Grandma's house from the neighbours. He checked that no one was watching, then opened fire.

The effect was instantaneous and beyond his wildest dreams. Priscilla was transformed instantly from an inert fluffy ball into a bedraggled projectile of wild spitting fury that hurtled itself headlong at her attacker. Paul felt the full force of her unsheathed claws on his face and back as Priscilla 'ran him over', then she hurtled across Grandma's backyard, up the wheelchair ramp, across the deck, and disappeared down the driveway.

Unfortunately, Aunty Ena was just emerging from the back door. She swerved to miss the flying cat, lost control of her wheelchair on the ramp, and ended up face down in the rose bushes.

Paul spent the next few days in his room, having suddenly discovered a previously unheard of interest in a pile of books his mother had borrowed from the library.



Notes on Story Structure

Characters
Setting
Problem
Response
Action
Outcome
Themes



COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

Reading instruction is all about teaching reading strategies. As readers move into the FLUENT stage the focus shifts from decoding strategies to **comprehension strategies**.

What are comprehension strategies and how do I teach them?

"The Three Steps" provides you with the answer; a systematic, predictable routine that takes all the stress out of "what do I do" for you the teacher and your students, and gets results.

THE THREE STEPS - an outline for narrative text

Divide the text into chunks (often a paragraph, sometimes two).
Each chunk is processed using "The Three Steps".

Step 1: Read a chunk of text silently

- ♦ Students read silently down to a point that you have determined
- ♦ Fast finishers do not read on; they make notes on the story structure in the margin provided and silently prepare for Step Two

Step 2: Detailed Retelling

"Digging into the words to make sure we have we got the message right"

The chunk is now retold as a group. Group members (including the teacher) take turns one sentence at a time.

- ♦ A student reads aloud one sentence and then, starting with "I think that means...", uses thinking aloud to unpack the meaning by expanding what the words are saying.
- ♦ The other members of the group take turns with successive sentences.
- ♦ As the students become fluent with this routine, they are shown how to include the DEEP FIVE strategies.

Step 3: Add to the Story Web

"What new information have we found out about the story structure?"

- ♦ Students discuss story developments and add to a Story Web
(See page 67 for an example of a Story Web)

A proven process that delivers results

This is an instructional process based on the most current research on comprehension instruction and is now used extensively in schools. There is significant data available on its success in raising the understanding of text for all readers - proficient and struggling.

- ♦ Students move from being passive participants to active readers as they are required to take responsibility for making meaning.
- ♦ Students unpack the text ... you oversee the process.
- ♦ "The Three Steps" provides a transparent routine - students understand what they are doing and why.

Go to our website **www.sharpreading.com** to view our video tutorials and other support material to get the most out of this teaching approach.

THE THREE STEPS

STEP 1 : Read Silently

Use your strategies to make sure you understand the text

STEP ONE

A chance to read the paragraph silently and to practice using reading strategies to understand what the text says.

STEP 2 : Detailed Retelling

Start with

"I think that means"

Check whether you understand the message by expanding it and putting it in your own words

STEP TWO

Part 1: Students expand each sentence using "I think that means ..." to make sure they are getting the message right

SENTENCE LEVEL COMPREHENSION



Use the "DEEP FIVE" COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES to overcome roadblocks

1. Make a connection to something you know
"I know that because . . ."

2. Visualise what the words are saying
"I have a picture in my head of . . ."

3. Make a connection to something else in the text
"In the last paragraph it said that . . ."

4. Ask questions about the information
"I wonder why . . . ?"

5. Form an hypothesis about what is going on
"I think this is because . . ."

STEP TWO

Part 2: Once the readers are fluent with the "I think that means..." routine, start to teach them to use the "Deep Five" strategies

STEP 3 : Add to the Story Web

What new information have we found?

Characters and Setting

Who Where When

Problem

A conflict for the characters

Feelings

How the characters FEEL about the problem

Action

What the characters DO to try to solve the problem

Outcome

How it all works out

Theme

Why did the author write this story?
What does this story tell us about the way people think, feel, and act.

TEXT LEVEL "Big Picture" COMPREHENSION

STEP THREE

Now that the information in the chunk of text has been properly processed in Step 2, look at the big picture. What new developments are there in the story? What new information can be added to the story web?



LESSON PLANS

Time savers for the teacher

Each lesson plan follows a simple format with important prompts and useful information that allows you, the teacher, to run your lesson with minimal preparation time.

STORY SUMMARY

Use this to quickly decide whether this story will meet the interest and needs of your group.

LEARNING OUTCOMES and SUCCESS CRITERIA

Select from the list on **page 62** according to the needs of your students.

The Lesson

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION

Orientate you readers to the story - engage the brain.

The lesson plan provides you with prompts to ...

- ♦ Activate prior knowledge and personal experiences
- ♦ Introduce unfamiliar concepts readers will come across in the story
- ♦ Look for story clues in the title

GUIDED SILENT READING

The heart of the lesson - Comprehension Strategy Instruction using

"The Three Steps" teaches the readers to ...

- ♦ Unpack the story for themselves
- ♦ Make sure they have got the message right
- ♦ Identify the structure of the story

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

Now that the story has been properly processed, time for ...

- ♦ Reflection on the story structure
- ♦ Deeper analysis of the story to uncover the features of good story writing - a great lead in to their own story writing

VIDEO TUTORIALS AVAILABLE NOW

These lesson plans outline a simple routine which, over time, will develop powerful reading strategies in your students.

Video tutorials are available on our website to help you implement these lessons.

www.sharpreading.com

Resource
this story can
be found in.
Reading Age

LESSON PLAN

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BOOK

Short Stories 1: 5 RA 11-12 years

BY HILTON AYREY

STORY SUMMARY

Paul is on holiday with his mum and dad. Mum is preoccupied with Grandma, Dad sleeps all the time and Paul is being hounded by his overprotective aunty in her wheelchair. Desperate for some action, Paul turns his attention to the neighbour's cat with some

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experience

Questions to access
prior knowledge and
personal experiences

Discuss students' experiences visiting or staying with grandparents.
What are their houses like? Are there different rules than at your place? Is there much to do?
Discuss title "There's nothing like a good book" - are there any clues about the story?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ What to look for when you read this passage.

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING Making sure we have got the message right.

Step Three: ADD TO STORY WEB Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome
Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension

Possible story structure that
can be identified from each
chunk of text as the story is
being read and discussed

Suggested fast
finishers activity for
those who read
faster than others

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for the CHARACTERS, SETTING and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Every year Paul and his mum and dad went to stay with his grandmother and aunty for the first two weeks of their holiday. Because they lived a long way away, and didn't see each other very often, his mother spent all her time talking to Grandma and drinking cups of tea. Paul's father was very tired and spent most of the time sleeping.

understatement

Paul was a very active boy with a **vivid imagination** and this **dreary adult lifestyle didn't suit him well**. And then there was Aunty Ena. She had fallen off a horse when she was little, injured her back and had spent a lifetime in a wheelchair. Now she spent all day following Paul around nagging him with "Be careful! Be careful!" in her shrill, aunty voice if he tried to do anything that was slightly adventurous.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Paul - very active
vivid imagination
adult lifestyle doesn't suit
Mum - spends all her time with Grandma
Dad - tired, sleeps a lot
Aunty Ena - a cripple
- nervous about others having accidents

Problem

Grandma's place isn't set up for an active boy
Aunty Ena is stalking him

Setting a Purpose: **What would you do in a situation like this?**
What do you think Paul will do given what we know about him?
READ - look for Paul's FEELINGS about the problem and the ACTION he takes.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

It was the middle of the fly season and Paul used up a morning by **contracting out his services** to Grandma to hunt down flies with a fly swot. But after 127 kills, there were too many stains on the wallpaper and Aunty Ena was **having a nervous breakdown**.

hyperbole

Early one morning, while everyone was still sleeping, Paul tackled the challenge of **'rock climbing' his way around the living room** without touching the carpet. This was a difficult assignment as Grandma had lots of fussy little ornaments perched on the **mantelpiece** and on her **china cabinets**, all of which had to be carefully negotiated by the **intrepid explorer**. He had almost completed the **traverse** when a poor choice of foothold sent a **china baby Jesus to its doom** on the **fireplace hearth**. The whir of Aunty Ena's wheelchair in the hallway prompted a quick decision to call it quits and head outside to see if he could find something else to do far away from the prying eyes of the **safety police**.

hyperbole

metaphor

Action

Finds interesting things to do (he has a vivid imagination)
- He hunts flies
- He rock climbs the living room

Feelings

Paul was desperate to get away from Aunty Ena

Action

He goes outside to get away from Aunty Ena

Questions and prompts to
establish a
purpose for
reading each
chunk of text

Bold Italics =
strong language
features, concepts
or vocab in the text
which provide
interest and
challenges during
detailed retelling

Examples of imagery

bour's

the rose

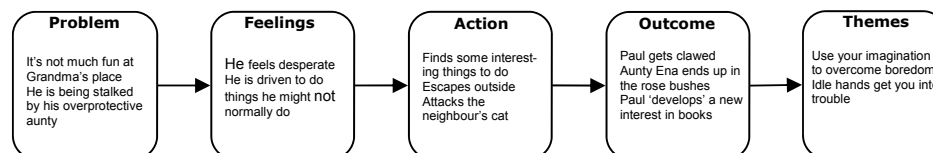
quieter
uble
y Ena

Suggestions for follow-
up discussion once the
GSR process has
been completed

AFTER READING DISCUSSION:

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



Suggestions for
reviewing the story web
now that students can
see the big picture

Guidelines for story
critiquing

2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.
Use "How Good is this Story?" on page 68 as a basis for this discussion.
The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Important because it is the reason for the story problem.

Characters: A good insight into what makes Paul tick.

Story Structure: Conflict between an active boy and an overprotective aunty works well. Episodes build up logically to the finale.

Theme: Not a strong theme. Dealing with boredom on holiday.

Language Features: Some colourful descriptions - "rock climbing" and the cat attack.

Examples of the
comments students
may make about the
different features of a
story



FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

using Bloom's Taxonomy

Each story has a set of follow-up activities (see example on next page). These activities are intended to be used after the students have been guided through the text in a small group.

High value activities - something for everyone

- ♦ Activities range from low level, literal responses (security for those who lack confidence) to high level analysis, synthesis, and evaluation tasks. Your top end learners will love these.
- ♦ Many activities allow for a visual as well as a written response to provide an alternative for reluctant writers

An important part of Comprehension Strategy Instruction

- ♦ The higher level thinking skills of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are important comprehension strategies in their own right. These activities build on the work done during the Three Steps

An organisational necessity

- ♦ With students working independently on these activities you can focus on your instructional groups.
- ♦ Activities are designed as individual tasks to help create that quiet work focus you need to concentrate on groups, but they can be adapted to co-operative activities if you feel your classroom organisation and work ethic allows for it.

All the hard work has been done for you

- ♦ There is a huge amount of follow-up work included in each worksheet.
- ♦ Once the activities have been taught there is continuity from story to story; you are not having to teach lots of new activities. The challenge for the student comes from applying the known activity to a new story context.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THESE ACTIVITIES

- ♦ Spend time modelling the activities, discussing criteria and expectations for the different tasks to get better results. Use pages 66-69 to help you with this.
- ♦ Don't expect students to do them all
 - allow choice; they will find that very motivating
- ♦ Consider using a work contract - allocate a points value for each activity with a target score that has to be achieved depending on the time available.
 - For example 1 = had a go at the activity
 - 3 = completed task according to agreed criteria
 - 5 = something extra-went beyond the requirement
- Each activity can be rated 3 times - self, buddy, teacher who has the final say.
- ♦ Provide a live audience for the finished product so that the tasks are seen to be purposeful not just done "for the teacher". Students will piggyback off each others ideas and enthusiasm.

See pages 66-69 for exemplars of some of the activities

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES using Bloom's Taxonomy

Developing creative thinking and critical literacy skills

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BOOK BY HILTON AYREY



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:5

Bloom's Level One
Locating literal
information from
the text

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

Bloom's Level Two
Developing inferential
comprehension
skills

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. Why did Aunt Ena follow Paul around all day?
What tells you that Paul was bored?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering to read between the lines.

Bloom's Level Three
Using the information
from the story in
other ways

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about the incident at Grandma's house and the problem of children being bored in the holidays. Include at least 2 short interviews with Paul, Aunt Ena, or other characters in the story. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the descriptions in this story to write a poem or a rap song about Aunt Ena or the neighbour's cat Priscilla.

Bloom's Level Four
Analysis of the setting
and the story structure

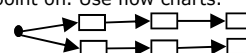
ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the setting using the information in the story. Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place. Be prepared to explain your story map to others.
6. **STORY WEB:** Complete a story web for this story.
Include: SETTING--CHARACTERS--PROBLEM--FEELINGS---ACTION--OUTCOME--THEMES

Bloom's Level Five
Making changes to the
story and designing
solutions to problems

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF:** "... prompted a quick decision to call it quits and head outside to see if he could find something else to do ..."
Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts. Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story. Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design an early warning alarm system that would help Paul to avoid the attentions of Aunt Ena.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.



Bloom's Level Six
Exploring a theme
from the story by
looking at both sides
of a statement

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. **SEEING BOTH SIDES**
"Parents should make sure their children have plenty to do on holiday"
Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...

I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

Bloom's Level Six
Using criteria to
critique a story

10. **HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?**
Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)
 - CHARACTERS - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
 - STORY STRUCTURE - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
 - LANGUAGE FEATURES - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
 - THEME - Does this story have something important to say about how people behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

THE STORIES

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

and

LESSON PLANS

IF ONLY

BY HILTON AVREY



Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

My Uncle Jim was a deer hunter and was always talking about hunting. One Saturday he gave me an old bow and some arrows. Of course, the arrows were blunt and just bounced off targets, but Mum didn't really approve of Uncle Jim and his hunting ways. She certainly wouldn't have been very happy about me firing arrows around the place, so I made sure she didn't know about it.

One day after school Michael came over to my place. Michael was my friend. Not my best friend, but he lived down the road so if I needed someone to play with he was handy. I got out my bow and arrows and we crept around the backyard hunting all sorts of wild animals. We pretended we were poachers, hunting illegal game, and Mum was the Park Ranger, to be avoided at all costs. We weren't very good. It took seven shots before we finally hit the very obliging giraffe (the plum tree) and it took ages to sneak up downwind of a huge bull elephant (the garden shed), close enough to lodge an arrow into its tough hide (the rusting corrugated-iron walls).

It was time for Michael to go home. As he headed down the driveway I rose from my hiding place, the last remaining poacher, fitted an arrow to my bow and took aim at the fleeing deer. This time the arrow flew straight and true towards the back of the target's head. I panicked. "Michael! Look out!" I yelled. He turned and the arrow hit him in the face. He screamed and ran off down the street with his hands over his eye, blood pouring everywhere.

I couldn't move. I stood there for ages; my mind was a total blank. I couldn't believe this had happened. If only I could take that moment back. I knew I should run inside and tell Mum but I couldn't. What I had done was too awful. "Please God; let him be all right and I promise I'll never do anything dumb like this again," I kept saying to myself.

Stupid bow and arrow! I went to the garage and sawed it in half but that didn't make me feel any better. I couldn't own up to what I had done. I hid away from the world in my tree hut until it was dark and I had convinced myself that it hadn't actually happened.

At 7 o'clock that night there was a knock at the door. Mum went to answer it and she was away for quite some time. Eventually she came into the kitchen looking very pale. She took my hand and led me down the hallway to the front door. There was Michael and his mum. His left eye was covered with a huge bandage that was wrapped around his head.

"Mrs Hawke just wanted us to know that Michael is all right. He was very lucky that there was no damage to his eye. A little bit lower and it would have been very serious."

I was too embarrassed to speak. I couldn't look at Michael or his mum. I just looked at the ground while my mother did the talking.

I never went back to Michael's place after that and he didn't seem to want to come to my place anymore. My mum was furious, but mainly disappointed with me. She never said anything to anyone else about the incident. I think she was embarrassed too.

About a month later we were visiting my uncle. "Come out to the garage. I've got something for you," he said to me. There on his workbench was the most wicked-looking slingshot I had ever seen.



BY HILTON AYREY



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:1

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. *Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.*

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. Why did Mum not approve of Uncle Jim?
Why was Mum the Park Ranger?
Why was Mum looking very pale when she came back into the kitchen?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

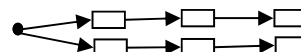
3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write an item for the TV news about dangerous toys. Include at least 2 interviews with people from the following list: the storyteller, Michael, the mothers, an expert on children's toys. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your item. *Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.*
4. **POETRY:** Write a poem or a rap song about the boys' fantasy hunting game.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the storyteller's backyard using the information in the story. Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place. *Be prepared to explain your Story Map to others.*
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF:** "... He screamed and ran off down the street with his hands over his eye, blood pouring everywhere ... "
Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts. Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story
OR Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Create a backyard theme park to make the boys' hunting game really interesting and challenging. *Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.*



EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"Dangerous toys like bows and arrows, and slingshots should be banned"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

Short Stories 1: 1 RA 10-11 years

IF ONLY BY HILTON AYREY

STORY SUMMARY

The storyteller has been given a bow and arrow by his uncle. Mum would never have approved and her concerns about safety are realised when the hunting game in the backyard goes wrong and someone gets hurt. Unfortunately the storyteller cannot bring himself to own up. A story about taking responsibility for your actions especially when someone may have been seriously injured. The ending presents a dilemma for the storyteller - has he really learnt his lesson?

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "If only .". What clues does this give us about the story?

Invite students to share their own "If only ." experiences.

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **Read - look for SETTING, CHARACTERS and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

strong adjective

My Uncle Jim was a deer hunter and was always talking about hunting. One Saturday he gave me an old bow and some arrows. Of course, the arrows were blunt and just bounced off targets, but Mum didn't really approve of Uncle Jim and his **hunting** ways. She certainly wouldn't have been very happy about me firing arrows around the place, so I made sure she didn't know about it.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Uncle Jim - a keen deer hunter
Storyteller - hides things from his mum

Mum

- Doesn't like dangerous toys
- Doesn't approve of Uncle Jim and his 'hunting ways'

No indication of the problem yet

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for any new CHARACTERS, SETTING and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

explained metaphors

continuation of the make believe game

One day after school Michael came over to my place. Michael was my friend. Not my best friend, but he lived down the road so if I needed someone to play with he was handy. I got out my bow and arrows and we crept around the backyard hunting all sorts of wild animals. We pretended we were **poachers, hunting illegal game**, and Mum was the **Park Ranger, to be avoided at all costs**. We weren't very good. It took seven shots before we finally hit the **very obliging giraffe (the plum tree)** and it took ages to **sneak up downwind of a huge bull elephant (the garden shed)**, close enough to **lodge an arrow in its tough hide (the rusting corrugated-iron walls)**.

It was time for Michael to go home. As he headed down the driveway I rose from my hiding place, **the last remaining poacher**, fitted an arrow to my bow and took aim at the **fleeing deer**. This time the arrow flew straight and true towards the back of the target's head. I panicked. "Michael! Look out!" I yelled. He turned and the arrow hit him in the face. He screamed and ran off down the street with his hands over his eye, blood pouring everywhere.

New Character

Michael - lives down the road
- not a 'best' friend
The storyteller 'uses' him when he has no one else to play with

Setting

At the storyteller's house

Problem

The storyteller fires an arrow and it hits Michael in the face

Setting a Purpose: **How would you feel if it was you who fired the arrow? What would you do? What should the storyteller do? READ - look for the FEELINGS and ACTION.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

metaphor

metaphor

I couldn't move. I stood there for ages; **my mind was a total blank**. I couldn't believe this had happened. If only I could take that moment back. I knew I should run inside and tell Mum but I couldn't. What I had done was too awful. "Please God; let him be all right and I promise I'll never do anything dumb like this again," I kept saying to myself. Stupid bow and arrow! I went to the garage and sawed it in half but that didn't make me feel any better. I couldn't own up to what I had done. **I hid away from the world** in my tree hut until it was dark and I had convinced myself that it hadn't actually happened.

Feelings

Felt shocked, terrible

Action

Does nothing
Convinces himself it didn't happen

Setting a Purpose: *What will happen next? Brainstorm possibilities.*
READ - look for the OUTCOME?

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

At 7 o'clock that night there was a knock at the door. Mum went to answer it and she was away for quite some time. Eventually she came into the kitchen **looking very pale**. She took my hand and led me down the hallway to the front door. There was Michael and his mum. His left eye was covered with a huge bandage that was wrapped around his head.

"Mrs Hawke just wanted us to know that Michael is all right. He was very lucky that there was no damage to his eye. **A little bit lower and it would have been very serious.**"

I was too embarrassed to speak. I couldn't look at Michael or his mum. I just looked at the ground while my mother did the talking.

Outcome

Michael and his mum turn up
Michael isn't seriously hurt
Storyteller is very embarrassed

Setting a Purpose: *How is the author going to wrap up this story?*
What will be the consequence of this OUTCOME?

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

I never went back to Michael's place after that and **he didn't seem to want to come to my place anymore**. My mum was furious, but mainly disappointed with me. She never said anything to anyone else about the incident. I think she was embarrassed too.

About a month later we were visiting my uncle.

"Come out to the garage. I've got something for you," he said to me.

There on his workbench was the most wicked-looking slingshot I had ever seen.

Further Outcome

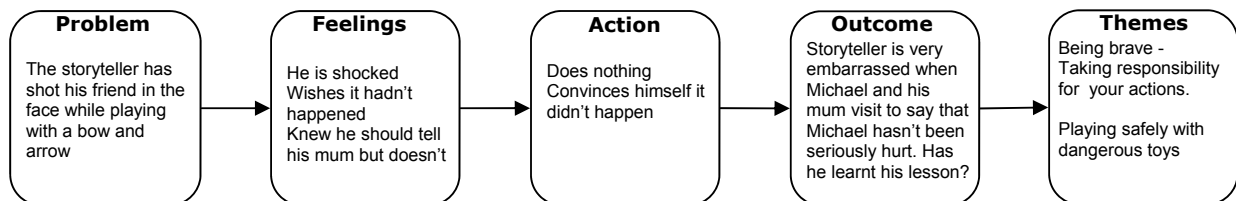
Michael doesn't come over anymore

A twist at the end - a new temptation for the storyteller.

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: The setting is important - playing at home, the background for the game that created the problem.

Characters: Storyteller's struggle to do the right thing - explores his lack of courage to face up, and has he learnt his lesson?

Story Structure: A believable story - something that most children will have experienced. Open ending - will he take the slingshot?

Theme: Having the courage to take responsibility for your actions.

Language Features: Some use of metaphor in the make believe hunting game. Colour words - obliging.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

THE LESSON

BY PHILIPPA COSGROVE

Sally didn't know why she'd done it. Nothing seemed simple anymore. She looked down at her big toe which was making circles in the gravel, round and round, in the same spot. Something about this action reminded her of being a little girl again, playing in the stones pretending she was looking for treasure. When she was younger and things had gone wrong she would run to her mother and tell her everything. But now, without her mum...now she just sat and made circles in the gravel with her toe.

Earlier that day Sally had gone to the mall to see a movie. She met up with Aroha, Ellie and Jane in the food court. But Izzy was late. Izzy was always late. As they stood around waiting for her, Sally felt a surge of resentment. Why should they always wait for Izzy. What was so special about Izzy that she always kept them waiting? Izzy, she decided, needed to be taught a lesson.

"Enough is enough," said Sally. "Izzy is always making us wait around as if we've got nothing better to do. It's time she learnt she's not the star she seems to think she is. Come with me."

Sally strode off with Aroha, Ellie, and Jane trailing with some reluctance behind her. Sally assumed nothing less than their compliance and they knew better than to argue with her when she was in one of her moods. Her destination was the corner of the food court that was directly opposite to the direction that Izzy would arrive from. The other three girls were placed out of sight behind the delicatessen stand while Sally maintained a discreet vigil. It wasn't long before she spotted Izzy standing by the fountain. Sally watched as Izzy stood there checking her watch, looking increasingly anxious and searching the maze of faces that surrounded her. Sally had a strange feeling of satisfaction. Aroha dared to peek a look.

"There she is, let's go."

"No!" said Sally sharply. "We're teaching her a lesson. It won't mean anything if we give up so quickly." No-one dared to say anything and so they waited, and waited, while Sally watched Izzy.

"But we're going to miss the movie," Ellie started to complain. "She's learnt her lesson by now. Come on, please."

"This is more important," was Sally's unyielding reply.

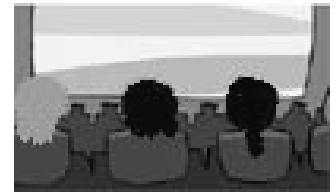
The girls beside her grew impatient, uncomfortable and bored, but Sally would not budge.

After twenty minutes, and with just five minutes left before the movie began, Sally lead the way over to the table in the middle of the food court where Izzy now sat, head in hands. As they approached Izzy looked up with a red, blotchy, tear-stained face.

"Hurry up or we'll be late," said Sally coldly and they headed for the counter to get their tickets. No-one said much.

Back at home, Sally continued to sit and draw circles in the stones feeling miserable and confused. She hadn't been able to enjoy the movie and left quickly once it was over. Sally wondered what her mother would have thought if she had known what she'd done. Maybe she did know...no, Sally did not believe in all that stuff about people watching from above. Still, her face went red at the thought of it all the same. It was strangely easy to imagine what her mother might have said to her.

"You get on the phone right now and apologise to Izzy, and to the others." Sally felt something shift inside her. With her foot she scattered the gravel back over the circles she had made, jumped up, and ran inside.



Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

THE LESSON

BY PHILIPPA COSGROVE



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:2

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them.
Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. What was the trigger for Sally's bad mood?
Why did the other girls let Sally boss them around?
What helped Sally get over her bad mood?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a human interest item for the TV news about bad moods in teenage girls and the effect this has on their relationships with each other.
Include at least 2 interviews with people from the following list: Sally, Izzy, the other girls, an expert on bad moods. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your item.
4. **POETRY:** Write a poem or a rap song about being in a bad mood.
How does it make you feel? What do you do when you are in a bad mood? How does it end?

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the mall using the information in the story.
Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place.
Be prepared to explain your STORY MAP to others.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story.
Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF:** "... It's time she learnt she's not the star she seems to think she is.
Come with me ..."
Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts.
Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story
OR Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a Bad Mood Indicator that tells you when a bad mood is on its way and then prevents you from getting into one.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"You don't have to have bad moods"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

Short Stories 1: 2 RA 10-11 years

THE LESSON

BY PHILIPPA COSGROVE

STORY SUMMARY

Sally is unhappy. She has forced a confrontation with her friends, ruined an outing to the movies, and she is not sure why it happened or what to do about it. A story about bad moods and how they affect relationships. In this case the problem is complicated by the loss of a parent.

The author uses flashback to tell the story. A nice sense of resolution for the main character at the end of the story.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Ask students to share what they do when they are in a 'bad mood' or feel out of sorts.

How does it affect the way you behave towards your friends? What do you do to get out of a 'bad mood'?

Discuss title "The Lesson" - are there any clues about the story? Brainstorm possibilities .

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: READ - look for SETTING, CHARACTERS, clues about the PROBLEM

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

flashback

ellipses...suggests a problem

Sally didn't know why she'd done it. Nothing seemed simple anymore. She looked down at her big toe which was making circles in the gravel, round and round, in the same spot. Something about this action reminded her of being a little girl again, playing in the stones pretending she was looking for treasure. ***When she was younger*** and things had gone wrong she would run to her mother and tell her everything. But now, without her mum...now she just sat and made circles in the gravel with her toe.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Sally - a girl

Setting

No clues yet about the setting

Problem

Sally is unhappy about something she has done.

Setting a Purpose: What do you think Sally is upset about?

Make predictions - justify your ideas from the text.

READ - look for new CHARACTERS, the SETTING and the PROBLEM

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

flashback

strong statement

metaphor

Earlier that day Sally had gone to the mall to see a movie. She met up with Aroha, Ellie and Jane in the food court. But Izzy was late. Izzy was always late. As they stood around waiting for her, Sally felt a surge of resentment. Why should they always wait for Izzy. What was so special about Izzy that she always kept them waiting? Izzy, she decided, needed to be taught a lesson.

"Enough is enough," said Sally. "Izzy is always making us wait around as if we've got nothing better to do. It's time she learnt ***she's not the star she seems to think she is.*** Come with me."

New Characters

Sally's friends Aroha, Ellie, Jane Izzy

Initial Problem

Izzy was late - she is always late

Feelings

Sally got angry with Izzy

Setting a Purpose: What do you think Sally's plan is? Brainstorm possibilities.

READ - look for the ACTION.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

metaphor

Sally strode off with Aroha, Ellie, and Jane trailing with some reluctance behind her. Sally ***assumed nothing less than their compliance*** and they knew better than to argue with her when she was in one of her moods. ***Her destination was the corner of the food court*** that was directly opposite to the direction that Izzy would arrive from. The other three girls were placed out of sight behind the delicatessen stand while Sally maintained a ***discreet vigil***. It wasn't long before she spotted Izzy standing by the fountain. Sally watched as Izzy stood there checking her watch, looking increasingly anxious and searching the ***maze of faces*** that surrounded her. Sally had a strange feeling of satisfaction. Aroha dared to peek a look.

"There she is, let's go."

"No!" said Sally sharply. "We're teaching her a lesson. It won't mean anything if we give up so quickly." No-one dared to say anything and so they waited, and waited, while Sally watched Izzy.

Action

Sally made the girls hide from Izzy to teach her a lesson

Setting a Purpose: *How is this going to turn out? What are some possibilities?*
READ - look for the rest of the ACTION?

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong adjective

"But we're going to miss the movie," Ellie started to complain. "She's learnt her lesson by now. Come on, please."

"This is more important," was Sally's **unyielding reply**.

The girls beside her grew impatient, uncomfortable and bored, but Sally would not budge.

list of adjectives

After twenty minutes, and with just five minutes left before the movie began, Sally lead the way over to the table in the middle of the food court where Izzy now sat, head in hands. As they approached Izzy looked up with a **red, blotchy, tear-stained face**.

"Hurry up or we'll be late," said Sally coldly and they headed for the counter to get their tickets. No-one said much.

Action

They go over to Izzy just before the movie starts

Setting a Purpose: *How is this going to affect the characters?*
READ - look for the OUTCOME.

Back at home, Sally continued to sit and draw circles in the stones feeling miserable and confused. She hadn't been able to enjoy the movie and left quickly once it was over. Sally wondered what her mother would have thought if she had known what she'd done. Maybe she did know no, Sally did not believe in all that stuff about **people watching from above**. Still, her face went red at the thought of it all the same. It was strangely easy to imagine what her mother might have said to her. "You get on the phone right now and apologise to Izzy, and to the others."

strong symbolic action

Sally felt something shift inside her. **With her foot she scattered the gravel back over the circles she had made**, jumped up, and ran inside.

Outcome

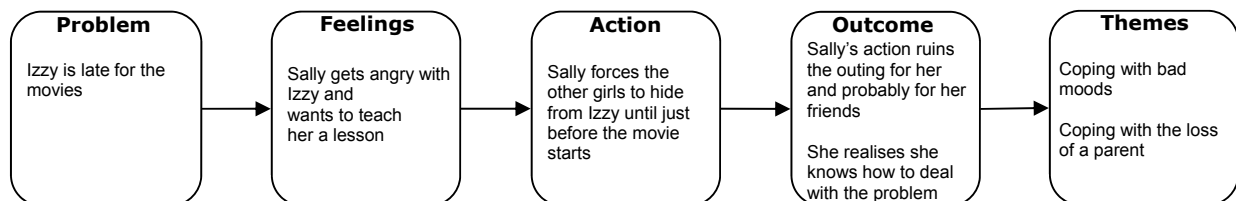
Sally had ruined the outing for herself and probably her friends as well

She knows what she has to do.
She is over her bad mood

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: A backdrop only to the relationship problems between the girls.

Characters: Sally is a well developed character. We don't find out much about the rest.

Story Structure: Writer uses flashback to tell the story - makes it interesting because we don't know what the problem is at the beginning.

Theme: Especially relevant to girls - coping with bad moods. Also the loss of a parent - someone to turn to.

Language Features: Some use of imagery and colour words - compliance, vigil, unyielding, blotchy.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

The Perfect Gift

by Marco Fazzi



The cat had chosen its new house carefully. It was north facing, which meant it would catch what little watery sunlight that the winter could offer. It had a nice big garden that no other cat had yet claimed, and there were no troublesome dogs for miles around. The house also included a man who worked from home, which meant the cat would have her meals prepared for her and that the house would be heated throughout the day.

It was a good arrangement. The cat would wake up at 11 o'clock sharp every morning, have breakfast then go for a morning snooze. Next came lunch, followed by a brisk ten-metre walk into the garden for her afternoon nap on the tree stump. As the evening approached, she would make her leisurely way back indoors to contemplate the day's events. Meanwhile, the man would always be working, hunched over the keyboard of his computer. He would sit like this for hours on end, motionless apart from his hands which would scuttle to and fro across the buttons like two big pale crabs. The cat liked to jump onto his shoulder and would comfortably sit there watching the busy hands on the keyboard and the symbols that appeared on the screen. The man would sometimes work through until the early hours of the morning and even then he might not go to bed, but instead would lie out on the couch with the cat purring contentedly on his chest.

And so it was on this particular night. It was 3am and the man had flopped on the sofa and fallen fast asleep. The cat watched the sleeping man and thought things over. Spring was fast approaching and the days were getting longer. It was time to move house again. The cat liked the man. She wanted to give him a present before she left, but what?

She jumped up onto the desk and looked at the man's work. She had watched him for days trying to solve a programming problem, and the man was still stuck.

"This is simple," purred the cat to herself. "A kitten could solve it." Her paws flew across the keyboard so quickly that they seemed to be in a hundred places at the same time. Within minutes the problem was solved but she doubted the man would be able to understand it. She had used some complicated maths that was far too difficult for humans to follow, and she didn't want to confuse him. She quickly erased the work and thought about it again.

All humans seemed to be very fond of money, so she decided that she would use the computer to transfer a large sum of money from the government to the man's bank account. This was a bit trickier, and her paws slowed a little as she broke all the password codes. She chose a nice big number with lots of zeros in it, and was about to send it to the man's bank account when she noticed how much money was already there. The man was already very, very rich. There was no point in giving him something he didn't really need.

The cat gazed at the computer and was thinking deeply about what to do when something caught her eye. She had just thought of the perfect gift, but she would need all her powers and cunning to arrange it, and she would need to work quickly.

It was just after dawn when the man awoke and he was surprised to find that the cat wasn't curled up on his chest. He wandered around the house looking for her, but the cat was gone. It was only when he sat down to work that he noticed the dead brown field mouse that had been carefully laid out next to his keyboard.

Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

The Perfect Gift

by Marco Fazzi



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:3

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Go back through the story and find all the information there is about the two characters. Show this information on **CHARACTER WEBS**, one for the man and one for the cat.
Draw a picture of each character in the centre of their web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. Why it was a good arrangement for the cat?
Was it a good arrangement for the man? (Give a reason for your answer)
Why did the cat have to move on?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a human interest story for TV about the man and the cat. Include short interviews with the man and the cat. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the what you have found out about cats in this story to write a poem or a rap song about how smart they really are.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the man's house using the information in the story. Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place.
Be prepared to explain your STORY MAP to others.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT COMES NEXT:** Where will the cat go now that she has left her winter home? Brainstorm at least 5 possibilities (let your imagination go wild!). Choose your two best ideas. Describe these new homes in words **OR** draw labelled pictures. You must give a reason why she has made these choices.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Think of an even better, more outrageous gift for the man. Describe this gift in words or draw a labelled diagram explain what it is and why it is the perfect gift.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"If you want to receive the perfect gift you have to buy it yourself "

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...

I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ◆ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ◆ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ◆ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ◆ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

Short Stories 1: 3 RA 10-11 years

The Perfect Gift by Marco Fazzi

STORY SUMMARY

A homeless cat finds a home for the winter - a very agreeable arrangement. When spring arrives and it is time to move on the cat wants to give a gift to the owner of the house who has looked after her so well. She thinks of a couple of possibilities but realises that both of these have their limitations. And then...she comes across the perfect gift.

A cat's eye view of the world with some unexpected perspectives on what cats are capable of (maybe).

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "The Perfect Gift" - what clues are there in this title about the story?

Discuss students' experiences with trying to buy presents for others.

How do you know what to get?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: READ - look for SETTING and CHARACTERS.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

*personification
strong image*

The cat had chosen its new house carefully. It was north facing, which meant ***it would catch what little watery sunlight that the winter could offer***. It had a nice big garden that no other cat had yet claimed, and there were no troublesome dogs for miles around. The house also included a man who worked from home, which meant the cat would have her meals prepared for her and that the house would be heated throughout the day.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

The cat
The man

Setting

The man's house

Setting a Purpose: What might the problem be. Brainstorm possibilities.

READ - look for the PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

understatement

It was a good arrangement. The cat would wake up at 11 o'clock sharp every morning, have breakfast then go for a morning snooze. Next came lunch, followed by a ***brisk ten-metre walk*** into the garden for her afternoon nap on the tree stump. As the evening approached, she would make her leisurely way back indoors to ***contemplate the day's events***.

strong simile

Meanwhile, the man would always be working, hunched over the keyboard of his computer. He would sit like this for hours on end, motionless apart from his hands which would ***scuttle to and fro across the buttons like two big pale crabs***. The cat liked to jump onto his shoulder and would comfortably sit there watching the busy hands on the keyboard and the symbols that appeared on the screen. The man would sometimes work through until the early hours of the morning and even then he might not go to bed, but instead would lie out on the couch with the cat purring contentedly on his chest.

And so it was on this particular night. It was 3am and the man had flopped on the sofa and fallen fast asleep. The cat watched the sleeping man and thought things over. Spring was fast approaching and the days were getting longer. It was time to move house again. The cat liked the man. She wanted to give him a present before she left, but what?

Problem

It was time to move on and the cat wanted to give the man a present

Setting a Purpose: *What sort of present could the cat give the man? Brainstorm ideas*
READ - look for the ACTION.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong verb

She jumped up onto the desk and looked at the man's work. She had watched him for days trying to solve a programming problem, and the man was still stuck.
"This is simple," purred the cat to herself. "A kitten could solve it."
Her paws **flew** across the keyboard so quickly that they seemed to be in a hundred places at the same time. Within minutes the problem was solved but she doubted the man would be able to understand it. She had used some complicated maths that was far too difficult for humans to follow, and she didn't want to confuse him. She quickly erased the work and thought about it again.

All humans seemed to be very fond of money, so she decided that she would use the computer to transfer a large sum of money from the government to the man's bank account. This was a bit trickier, and her paws slowed a little as she broke all the password codes. She chose a nice big number with lots of zeros in it, and was about to send it to the man's bank account when she noticed how much money was already there. The man was already very, very rich. There was no point in giving him something he didn't really need.

Character development

The cat is actually very smart and extremely good at maths.

This is the interesting twist to this story - a peek into life as cats see things (maybe)

Action

- Has two ideas
1. solving the computer problem
2. getting the man some money

Feelings

Decides that these ideas are not suitable

Setting a Purpose: *Now we know more about what the cat is capable of, what do you think will be the perfect gift?*
READ - look for the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

The cat gazed at the computer and was thinking deeply about what to do when something caught her eye. She had just thought of the perfect gift, but she would need all her powers and cunning to arrange it, and she would need to work quickly.

It was just after dawn when the man awoke and he was surprised to find that the cat wasn't curled up on his chest. He wandered around the house looking for her, but the cat was gone. It was only when he sat down to work that he noticed the dead brown field mouse that had been carefully laid out next to his keyboard.

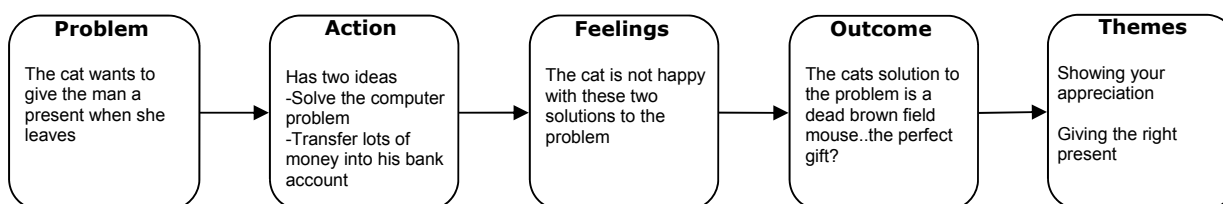
Outcome

The cats solution is open to interpretation.
Cats often leave mice or birds as 'presents'. Maybe it is the perfect gift because the man will understand that it is from the cat or was this supposed to be a mouse for the computer?

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.
Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.
The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Setting is important - the reason the cat is in the story. Some description.

Characters: Through the cats eyes - not much about the man. Interesting, unusual development of the cat character.

Story Structure: Interesting problem, an unusual perspective. Gap in the narration - the cat catching the mouse - creates effective ending.

Theme: A useful look at trying to find a good present. Applies to everyone.

Language Features: Straight narration, no dialogue, which gives a good flow. Great crab simile. Colour words - troublesome, contemplate.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

ROLAND FISH RISES UP

by Mary-Jane Stewart

Roland Fish was extremely large and awkward for his age. He sometimes stuttered and was below average in his school grades. Roland had very few friends, and felt as if he didn't belong anywhere.

His school-mates reminded him of his failings frequently. Worst of all he had gained the unwanted attention of Tim O'Malley. Tim was the ultimate school bully and unfortunately he was in Roland's class. Tim had the ability to smell out the weak and the insecure, and at every opportunity would drag them out of hiding and ruthlessly expose them for all to see. No one took Tim on because they were frightened of him. Not frightened because of his size or his strength, neither of which were particularly impressive, but because his tongue was sharper than any butcher's knife. Tim knew he could cut people down to size and make mincemeat out of them.

This game was fantastic for Tim and his followers, but soul destroying for Roland and other unfortunate targets. For months Roland's anger towards Tim simmered. He endured the snide comments and the never-ending humiliation in front of his peers, but deep inside his frustration was welling up, and his resolve to do something about it was growing. He wasn't sure what he might do but it was just a matter of time before he took the situation into his own oversized hands.

The eruption happened at the school canteen. Roland was about fifth in the queue when Tim the Tormenter sidled up next to him.

"Get to the back fat boy," sneered Tim.

Roland just stood still and ignored him.

"To the back Roly Poly!"

Roland stared straight ahead and refused to budge.

"Are you deaf as well as stupid? I said move!" screamed a now agitated Tim.

Roland's face started to colour. He could feel the adrenalin pumping through his broad body, red hot, molten lava looking for an outlet. In a flash he grabbed Tim, hoisted him above his head and began to spin him around in the air; a wobbly helicopter rotor blade in need of adjustment, a virtuoso performance from a seasoned juggler. Tim's scrawny body thrashed wildly in a vain attempt to release himself from Roland's grip, but to no avail. Roland was unrelenting. Around and around at bewildering speed went Tim.

And then, just as quickly as it had started, it was over as Roland unceremoniously returned Tim to his rightful place at the end of the queue. His landing wasn't smooth. As he tried to steady himself his wobbly legs collapsed underneath him and he deposited what was left of his breakfast in a disgusting pool on the canteen floor. Tim, his face white and a wild, frightened look in his eyes, scrambled to his feet and scurried from the canteen like a humiliated rat.

An eerie silence settled over the canteen, broken by Roland as he stepped up to the counter and ordered two mince pies and double fries.

For the first time in ages, Roland felt OK about himself, and for the first time ever, his classmates felt OK about him too.

Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

ROLAND FISH RISES UP

by Mary-Jane Stewart

ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:4

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**.
Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

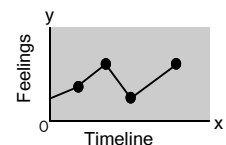
2. Why did Roland's classmates remind him of his failings?
Why was it a fantastic game for Tim and his followers?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about the incident in the school canteen. Include at least 2 short interviews with Roland, Tim, or witnesses to the incident. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the descriptions in the story to write a poem or a rap song about Tim the Tormentor's untimely end.

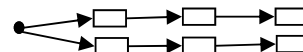
ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY GRAPH:** Show how Roland is feeling throughout this story.
The y axis should show feelings : 0 = feeling good, 5 = feeling angry.
The x axis should be a timeline : 0 = beginning of the story to the end.
The dots on the graph should mark special events in the story. Label what they are.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME



CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF:** "Are you deaf as well as stupid? I said move!" screamed a now agitated Tim. Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts. Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story
OR Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a machine that patrols the school grounds. Show how it can read the minds of bullies and dispose of them.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.



EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"We should feel sorry for bullies"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

Roland Fish Rises Up

Short Stories 1: 4 RA 11-12 years

by Mary-Jane Stewart

STORY SUMMARY

Roland Fish is subjected to Tim's verbal bullying. Finally, he has had enough and deals to the bully once and for all. The story follows a simple chronological sequence with a great ending where justice reigns and the antagonist comes to a sticky end.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "Roland Fish Rises Up" - what clues are there in this title about the story?

Discuss students' experiences when they have felt got at, picked on or bullied by someone else.

How did you feel? What did you do about it? How did you feel afterwards?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for SETTING, CHARACTERS, PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Roland Fish was extremely large and awkward for his age. He sometimes stuttered and was below average in his school grades. Roland had very few friends, and felt as if he didn't belong anywhere.

extended metaphor His school-mates reminded him of his failings frequently. Worst of all he had gained the **unwanted attention** of Tim O'Malley. Tim was the ultimate school bully and unfortunately, he was in Roland's class. Tim had the ability to **smell out the weak and the insecure**, and at every opportunity would **drag them out of hiding and ruthlessly expose them** for all to see. No one took Tim on because they were frightened of him. Not frightened because of his size or his strength, **neither of which were particularly impressive**, but because **his tongue was sharper than any butcher's knife**. Tim knew he could cut people down to size and make mincemeat out of them.

metaphor

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Roland - extremely large
- awkward
- below average at school
- very few friends
- felt like he didn't belong

Tim - No1 bully
- not very big or strong
- bullied people with words

Setting

At school

Problem

Roland is bullied by Tim

Setting a Purpose: **How do you feel when people bully you with words?**
READ - look for Roland's FEELINGS about the problem.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

metaphor This game was fantastic for Tim and his followers, but soul destroying for Roland and other unfortunate targets. For months Roland's anger towards Tim simmered. He endured the snide comments and the never-ending humiliation in front of his peers but deep inside his **frustration was welling up** and his **resolve to do something about it was growing**. He wasn't sure what he might do but it was just a matter of time before he took the situation into his own oversized hands.

hyperbole alliteration The **eruption** happened at the school canteen. Roland was about fifth in the queue when **Tim the Tormenter** sidled up next to him. "Get to the back fat boy," sneered Tim. Roland just stood still and ignored him. "To the back Roly Poly!" Roland stared straight ahead and refused to budge. "Are you deaf as well as stupid? I said move!" screamed a now agitated Tim.

Feelings

Roland gets angry inside
He also gets more determined to do something about it

Setting a Purpose: *Roland's moment has arrived.*
What do you think he will do? How far will he go?
Brainstorm possibilities.
READ - look for the ACTION - What does Roland do?

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

metaphor Roland's face **started to colour**. He could feel the adrenalin pumping through his broad body, **red hot, molten lava looking for an outlet**. In a flash he grabbed Tim, hoisted him above his head and began to spin
metaphor him around in the air; **a wobbly helicopter rotor blade in need of adjustment**, a **virtuoso performance from a seasoned juggler**. Tim's scrawny body thrashed wildly in a vain attempt to release himself from Roland's grip, but to no avail. Roland was unrelenting. Around and around at bewildering speed went Tim.

Action

Roland turns Tim into a human helicopter blade

Setting a Purpose: *How is this going to end?*
READ - look for the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

simile And then, just as quickly as it had started, it was over as Roland unceremoniously returned Tim to his rightful place at the end of the queue. His landing wasn't smooth. As he tried to steady himself his wobbly legs collapsed underneath him and he deposited what was left of his breakfast in a disgusting pool on the canteen floor. Tim, his face white and a wild, frightened look in his eyes, scrambled to his feet and scurried from the canteen **like a humiliated rat**.

An eerie silence settled over the canteen, broken by Roland as he stepped up to the counter and ordered two mince pies and double fries.

For the first time in ages, Roland felt OK about himself, and for the first time ever, his classmates felt OK about him too.

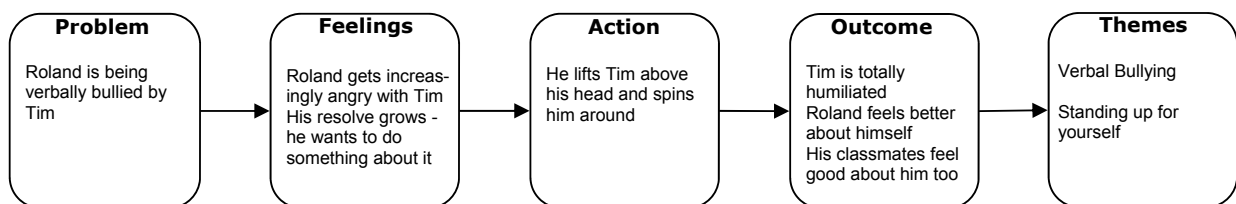
Outcome

Tim is totally humiliated
Roland feels good about himself
His classmates have a new respect for Roland

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: A backdrop for the action. Not much description but not needed.

Characters: Roland and Tim are well rounded characters - their conflict is central to the story.

Story Structure: Well paced action. Tension rises and then is released. Satisfying outcome - the bully gets done.

Theme: Bullying. Close to home so of interest to all.

Language Features: Some nice imagery - Roland the volcano erupting and Tim the human helicopter blade.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BOOK

BY HILTON AYREY



Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

Every year Paul and his mum and dad went to stay with his grandmother and aunty for the first two weeks of their holiday. Because they lived a long way away, and didn't see each other very often, his mother spent all her time talking to Grandma and drinking cups of tea. Paul's father was very tired and spent most of the time sleeping.

Paul was a very active boy with a vivid imagination and this dreary adult lifestyle didn't suit him well. And then there was Aunty Ena. She had fallen off a horse when she was little, injured her back and had spent a lifetime in a wheelchair. Now she spent all day following Paul around nagging him with "Be careful! Be careful!" in her shrill, aunty voice if he tried to do anything that was slightly adventurous.

It was the middle of the fly season and Paul used up a morning by contracting out his services to Grandma to hunt down flies with a fly swot. But after 127 kills, there were too many stains on the wallpaper and Aunty Ena was having a nervous breakdown.

Early one morning, while everyone was still sleeping, Paul tackled the challenge of 'rock climbing' his way around the living room without touching the carpet. This was a difficult assignment as Grandma had lots of fussy little ornaments perched on the mantelpiece and on her china cabinets, all of which had to be carefully negotiated by the intrepid explorer. He had almost completed the traverse when a poor choice of foothold sent a china baby Jesus to its doom on the fireplace hearth. The whir of Aunty Ena's wheelchair in the hallway prompted a quick decision to call it quits and head outside to see if he could find something else to do far away from the prying eyes of the safety police.

It was then that he noticed Priscilla, the neighbour's cat, asleep in the sun. Now Paul was not a boy who was normally unkind to animals, but his circumstances were pushing him to the limit and Priscilla was such a wimp. Her owner treated her like a baby. She had a nice soft blanket to lie on out in the sun, the very best gourmet cat food every day, and hours were spent grooming her long fluffy hair.

Paul planned his attack. He could have gone for total annihilation but settled for shock and stun. There was a spray gun attached to the hose, so he turned the tap on full and very carefully wriggled over to the hedge that separated Grandma's house from the neighbours. He checked that no one was watching, then opened fire.

The effect was instantaneous and beyond his wildest dreams. Priscilla was transformed instantly from an inert fluffy ball into a bedraggled projectile of wild spitting fury that hurtled itself headlong at her attacker. Paul felt the full force of her unsheathed claws on his face and back as Priscilla 'ran him over', then she hurtled across Grandma's backyard, up the wheelchair ramp, across the deck, and disappeared down the driveway.

Unfortunately, Aunty Ena was just emerging from the back door. She swerved to miss the flying cat, lost control of her wheelchair on the ramp, and ended up face down in the rose bushes.

Paul spent the next few days in his room, having suddenly discovered a previously unheard of interest in a pile of books his mother had borrowed from the library.

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BOOK

BY HILTON AYREY



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:5

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. Why did Aunt Ena follow Paul around all day?
What tells you that Paul was bored?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about the incident at Grandma's house and the problem of children being bored in the holidays. Include at least 2 short interviews with Paul, Aunt Ena, or other characters in the story. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
4. **POETRY:** Use the descriptions in this story to write a poem or a rap song about Aunt Ena or the neighbour's cat Priscilla.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the setting using the information in the story. Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place. Be prepared to explain your story map to others.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

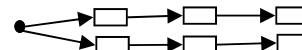
CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF:** "... prompted a quick decision to call it quits and head outside to see if he could find something else to do ..."

Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts.

Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story

OR Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles



8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design an early warning alarm system that would help Paul to avoid the attentions of Aunt Ena.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. **SEEING BOTH SIDES**

"Parents should make sure their children have plenty to do on holiday"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. **HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?**

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A GOOD BOOK

Short Stories 1: 5 RA 11-12 years

by Hilton Ayrey

STORY SUMMARY

Paul is on holiday with his mum and dad. Mum is preoccupied with Grandma, Dad sleeps all the time and Paul is being hounded by his overprotective aunty in her wheelchair. Desperate for some action, Paul turns his attention to the neighbour's cat with some surprising results.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss students' experiences visiting or staying with grandparents.

What are their houses like? Are there different rules than at your place? Is there much to do?

Discuss title "There's nothing like a good book" - are there any clues about the story?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for the CHARACTERS, SETTING and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Every year Paul and his mum and dad went to stay with his grandmother and aunty for the first two weeks of their holiday. Because they lived a long way away, and didn't see each other very often, his mother spent all her time talking to Grandma and drinking cups of tea. Paul's father was very tired and spent most of the time sleeping.

understatement

Paul was a very active boy with a **vivid imagination** and this **dreary adult lifestyle didn't suit him well**. And then there was Aunty Ena. She had fallen off a horse when she was little, injured her back and had spent a lifetime in a wheelchair. Now she spent all day following Paul around nagging him with "Be careful! Be careful!" in her shrill, aunty voice if he tried to do anything that was slightly adventurous.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Paul - very active
vivid imagination
adult lifestyle doesn't suit
Mum - spends all her time with Grandma
Dad - tired, sleeps a lot
Aunty Ena - a cripple
- nervous about others having accidents

Problem

Grandma's place isn't set up for an active boy
Aunty Ena is stalking him

Setting a Purpose: **What would you do in a situation like this?**

What do you think Paul will do given what we know about him?

READ - look for Paul's FEELINGS about the problem and the ACTION he takes.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

hyperbole

It was the middle of the fly season and Paul used up a morning by **contracting out his services** to Grandma to hunt down flies with a fly swot. But after 127 kills, there were too many stains on the wallpaper and Aunty Ena was **having a nervous breakdown**.

hyperbole

Early one morning, while everyone was still sleeping, Paul tackled the challenge of **'rock climbing' his way around the living room** without touching the carpet. This was a difficult assignment as Grandma had lots of fussy little ornaments perched on the **mantelpiece** and on her **china cabinets**, all of which had to be carefully negotiated by the **intrepid explorer**. He had almost completed the **traverse** when a poor choice of foothold sent a **china baby Jesus to its doom** on the **fireplace hearth**. The whir of Aunty Ena's wheelchair in the hallway prompted a quick decision to call it quits and head outside to see if he could find something else to do far away from the prying eyes of the **safety police**.

metaphor

Action

Finds interesting things to do (he has a vivid imagination)
- He hunts flies
- He rock climbs the living room

Feelings

Paul was desperate to get away from Aunty Ena

Action

He goes outside to get away from Aunty Ena

Setting a Purpose: **What might Paul find to do outside?**

READ - look for further ACTION and any new CHARACTERS.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

metaphor

It was then that he noticed Priscilla, the neighbour's cat, asleep in the sun. Now Paul was not a boy who was normally unkind to animals, but his circumstances were **pushing him to the limit** and Priscilla was such a **wimp**. Her owner treated her like a baby. She had a nice soft blanket to lie on out in the sun, the very best **gourmet cat food** every day, and hours were spent grooming her long fluffy hair.

New Character

Priscilla - neighbour's cat
- a wimp
- indulged by owner

Setting a Purpose: *Paul is being 'pushed to the limit'.*

What do you think he might do?

How far will he go?

READ - look for the further ACTION and the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

**strong nouns
alliteration**

Paul planned his attack. He could have gone for **total annihilation but settled for shock and stun**. There was a spray gun attached to the hose, so he turned the tap on full and very carefully wriggled over to the hedge that separated Grandma's house from the neighbours. He checked that no one was watching, then opened fire.

**vivid description
metaphor**

The effect was instantaneous and beyond his wildest dreams. Priscilla was transformed instantly from an **inert fluffy ball into a bedraggled projectile of wild spitting fury** that hurtled itself headlong at her attacker. Paul felt the full force of her **unsheathed claws** on his face and back as Priscilla **'ran him over'**, then she hurtled across Grandma's backyard, up the wheelchair ramp, across the deck, and disappeared down the driveway.

overstatement

Unfortunately, Aunty Ena was just emerging from the back door. She swerved to miss the flying cat, lost control of her wheelchair on the ramp, and ended up face down in the rose bushes.

Action

Paul attacks the neighbour's cat

Outcome

Paul gets clawed

Aunty Ena ends up in the rose bushes

Setting a Purpose: *How will this end? Brainstorm possibilities.*

READ - look for the OUTCOME.

Paul spent the next few days in his room, having suddenly discovered a previously unheard of interest in a pile of books his mother had borrowed from the library.

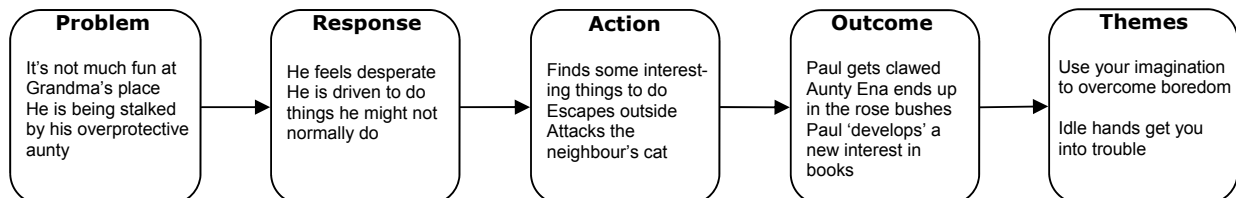
Further Outcome

Paul finds something quieter to do to stay out of trouble and/or to escape Aunty Ena

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Important because it is the reason for the story problem.

Characters: A good insight into what makes Paul tick.

Story Structure: Conflict between an active boy and a overprotective aunty works well. Episodes build up logically to the finale.

Theme: Not a strong theme. Dealing with boredom on holiday.

Language Features: Some colourful descriptions - "rock climbing" and the cat attack.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

HOT PLASMA ON THE ROCKS

BY NICK GRANT



A searing hot laser beam flashed across the nose of Matt's ship as he frantically hauled on the controls.

"How did I get myself into this mess?" he muttered between clenched teeth.

"It may have something to do with that Zapher stone you lifted from the Count," said a metallic voice.

"Oh, that's right," said Matt. "Everyone should have a robot like you to remind them about these things."

"There's no need to be sarcastic," said Nat. "I was only trying to help."

There was a loud bang and the ship lurched sideways. The intercom burst into life.

"Give it up Hudson!" said a booming voice, "or I'll blow you to smithereens!"

"The stone you stole must be returned to Princess Sophia," replied Matt.

"Not if I can help it!" shouted Count Salizar, and with that he unleashed another hail of molten laser at Matt's wildly evading ship. Matt rolled his ship to the right then threw it into a dive, spinning below the Count's ship.

"Nat, prepare to make the jump to light speed," he ordered.

The ship suddenly gave an almighty shudder and the instrument panel lit up with the urgent flash of red lights.

"What was that?!" yelled Matt.

"The Count has scored a direct hit on the light speed engine," replied Nat. "We will have to land to repair it."

"Bother!" Matt muttered.

He looked at the long-range scanners as another shot flashed close by.

"Nat," he said, "plot a course for those asteroids off our port bow."

"Yes sir," replied Nat, "Although can I remind you that flying into an asteroid field is a very dangerous idea."

"Thank you Nat. I'll keep that in mind."

Weaving in and out of laser beams, Matt closed in on the asteroids. Another bolt bounced off the hull.

"Hang on," yelled Matt. "We're about to enter the asteroid field. Re-route all power to the engine. Let's see if we can out-fly him in here."

Matt dropped his ship into a sharp nosedive and then spun just in time to miss a fast moving rock. The Count's ship followed. It wasn't as nimble as Matt's, but there it still was, hard on Matt's tail. Another huge asteroid loomed in his path, but Matt avoided it with a deft sideslip. Deeper and deeper into the asteroid field the two ships sped, with Matt dodging one way and then the other to avoid being pulverised by the fast moving asteroids, or fried by Count Salizar's lasers.

"That does it !" hollered Matt as the ship staggered once more from a direct hit.

"Time to do something about this moron!" He pulled back hard on his controls and his ship shot up, rolling and weaving in and out of the rocks as he executed a perfect loop over the Count's ship. Now, positioned directly behind the Count, Matt opened fire, spitting out his own hot plasma, raking the Count's ship from stem to stern.

The enemy pilot started to weave, but his ship wasn't as manoeuvrable as Matt's. A blast hit the slower ship's bow, dislodging it sideways into the path of an incoming asteroid. The rock hit, sending the ship spinning into a shallow dive. The pilot tried desperately to regain control, but it was too late. It bounced off one huge asteroid, directly into the path of another that smashed right into the ship's engines, ripping one off completely and badly damaging the other. As the ship tumbled out of control the Count's voice screamed over the intercom.

"It's not over, Hudson! I'll get you if it's the last thing I ever do . . ."

Matt flicked off the intercom.

"Let's find a place to fix this ship," he said to Nat, "and then we can return this Zapher stone."

Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

HOT PLASMA ON THE ROCKS

BY NICK GRANT



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:6

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

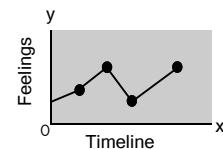
2. Why did Matt fly into an asteroid field?
Why was Matt able to out fly the Count?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about the battle in space. Include at least 2 short interviews with Matt, Nat, the Count, or Princess Sophia. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in the story to write a poem or a rap about the battle between Matt and the Count.

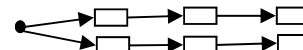
ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY GRAPH:** Show how Matt is feeling throughout this story.
The y axis should show feelings : 0 = feeling relaxed, 5 = feeling worried, anxious, angry
The x axis should be a timeline : 0 = beginning of the story to the end.
The dots on the graph should mark special events in the story. Label what they are.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME



CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF:** "That does it!" hollered Matt as the ship staggered once more from a direct hit . . . Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts. Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story
OR Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a new space ship for Matt that would defeat the Count without Matt having to rely on his superb flying skills.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.



EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"The fight between good and evil always makes for a good story"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

HOT PLASMA ON THE ROCKS

Short Stories 1: 6 RA 11-12 years

BY NICK GRANT

STORY SUMMARY

Matt Hudson, space hero, is being hotly pursued by Count Salizar. Matt is intent on returning a Zapher stone to its rightful owner but the Count wants it back. Matt is pushed to the limits of his flying skill to escape the Count's clutches.

The style is classic Star Wars with the inevitable clash between good and evil.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss the science fiction genre, in particular Star Wars - good vs evil.

How do you know who the goodies are and who are the baddies?

Discuss title "Hot Plasma on the Rocks" - are there any clues about the story?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for SETTING, CHARACTERS, and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

strong verb A searing hot laser beam flashed across the nose of Matt's ship as he ***frantically hauled on the controls.***

"How did I get myself into this mess?" he muttered between clenched teeth.

"It may have something to do with that Zapher stone you lifted from the Count," said a metallic voice.

sarcasm "Oh, that's right," said Matt. "Everyone should have a robot like you to remind them about these things."

"There's no need to be sarcastic," said Nat. "I was only trying to help."

There was a loud bang and the ship lurched sideways. The intercom burst into life.

"Give it up Hudson!" said a booming voice, "Or I'll blow you to smithereens!"

"The stone you stole must be returned to Princess Sophia," replied Matt.

"Not if I can help it!" shouted Count Salizar, and with that he unleashed another hail of molten laser at Matt's wildly evading ship. Matt rolled his ship to the right then threw it into a dive, spinning below the Count's ship.

"Nat, prepare to make the jump to light speed," he ordered.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Matt - the good guy.
He is wanting to return the stone to its rightful owner
Nat - robot - quite human
Count Salizar - the 'enemy'
Princess Sophia - owner of the Zapher stone

Setting

In space

Problem

Count Salizar stole a Zapher stone from Princess Sophia. Matt has stolen it back to return it and now is being chased by Count Salizar

Feelings

Only clue is "How did I get myself into this mess?"

Setting a Purpose: **What do you think Matt's plan is?**

READ - look for the ACTION Matt takes.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

heroic understatement

The ship suddenly gave an almighty shudder and the instrument panel lit up with the urgent flash of red lights.

"What was that?!" yelled Matt.

"The Count has scored a direct hit on the ***light speed engine,***" replied Nat. "We will have to land to repair it."

"Bother!" Matt muttered.

sarcasm

He looked at the long-range scanners as another shot flashed close by.

"Nat," he said, "plot a course for those ***asteroids*** off our port bow."

"Yes sir," replied Nat, "Although can I remind you that flying into an asteroid field is a very dangerous idea."

"Thank you Nat. I'll keep that in mind."

Weaving in and out of laser beams, Matt closed in on the asteroids. Another bolt bounced off the hull.

"Hang on," yelled Matt. "We're about to enter the asteroid field. Re-route all power to the engine. Let's see if we can out-fly him in here."

Problem Development

The light speed engine has been hit. Matt needs to come up with another plan

Action

Flies into an asteroid field to try and out-fly the Count

Setting a Purpose: What do you think will happen now?

READ - look for the further ACTION and the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong verb
technical term

Matt dropped his ship into a sharp nosedive and then spun just in time to miss a fast moving rock. The Count's ship following. It wasn't as **nimble** as Matt's, but there it still was, hard on Matt's tail. Another huge asteroid loomed in his path, but Matt avoided it with a deft **sideslip**. Deeper and deeper into the asteroid field the two ships sped, with Matt dodging one way and then the other to avoid being pulverised by the fast moving asteroids, or fried by Count Salizar's lasers.

Feelings

Matt has had enough

Action

Undertakes a very difficult manoeuvre

Setting a Purpose: How will this end? Brainstorm possibilities.

READ - look for the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong verb

"That does it!" hollered Matt as the ship staggered once more from a direct hit. "Time to do something about this moron!" He pulled back hard on his controls and his ship shot up, rolling and weaving in and out of the rocks as he **executed a perfect loop over the Count's ship**. Now, positioned directly behind the Count, Matt opened fire, spitting out his own hot plasma, raking the Count's ship from stem to stern.

The enemy pilot started to weave, but his ship wasn't as **manoeuvrable** as Matt's. A blast hit the slower ship's bow, dislodging it sideways into the path of an incoming asteroid. The rock hit, sending the ship spinning into a shallow dive. The pilot tried desperately to regain control, but it was too late. It bounced off one huge asteroid, directly into the path of another that smashed right into the ship's engines, ripping one off completely and badly damaging the other. As the ship tumbled out of control the Count's voice screamed over the intercom.

"It's not over, Hudson! I'll get you if it's the last thing I ever do . . ."

Matt flicked off the intercom.

"Let's find a place to fix this ship," he said to Nat, "And then we can return this Zapher stone."

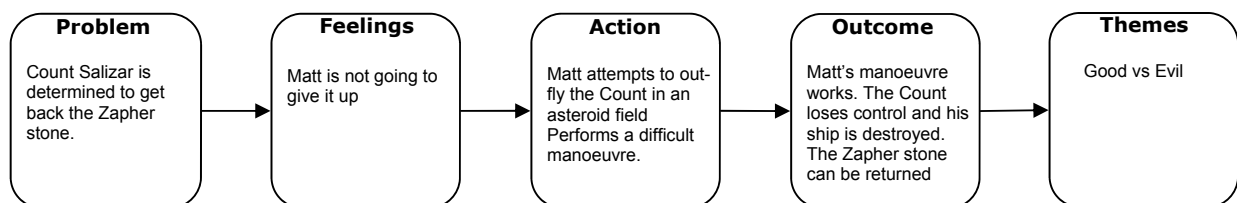
Outcome

The Count has been dealt with
The Zapher stone can be returned

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Space

Characters: Rather flat and 2 dimensional - hero and villain.

Story Structure: Tension builds to a climax.

Theme: Simple good vs evil theme typical of the Star Wars / science fiction genre.

Language Features: Racy - full of action. Colour words are mainly technical vocabulary specific to the sci-fi genre.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

Another Chance

by Tessa Ayrrey

Astrid touched the mirror's surface with her finger. It rippled like water in a still lake. How many times had she stood before it, searching for the courage to plunge through it into . . . what? She reached out again, her mind full of the possibilities of what lay beyond, jolted in an instant back to reality as a hand came through from the other side, grabbed her firmly by the wrist, and pulled her through.

Standing barefooted in a puddle on a concrete floor, with her long brown hair waving annoyingly across her face, she took in her surroundings; a huge deserted warehouse. Dull light seeped through tarnished windows. A hand touching her shoulder caused an involuntary jump. She spun around to see a tall, strong looking young man standing next to her.

The intensity in his face and his obvious agitation alarmed her.

"We have to hurry. You don't have much time," was all he said.

He wheeled around and headed for a small opening at the far end of the dimly lit room. His expectation that she would follow was implicit.

As she reached the doorway, an icy blast pierced her thin summer clothing. The stranger paused for a moment, his hesitation suggesting an unseen threat, then plunged outside and began to thread his way through the debris towards the gloomy light at the end of the alleyway. Astrid shuddered then followed. Discarded machinery and vehicles of an unfamiliar design and purpose were stacked unceremoniously in varying states of decay against the grimy walls of buildings that towered on either side of her, blocking out a view of the sky.

Their destination was a disappointment. The chaos of the alleyway gave way to an equally shabby street of crumbling shop facades and boarded up windows that had not withstood the attentions of looters. In a deserted courtyard, a withered oak tree, once proud and defiant, now bowed and diseased, gasped for one last breath from a foul, heavily laden atmosphere. Two dishevelled vagrants, taking comfort from the cold around a makeshift fire in a discarded oil drum, glared threateningly at the onlookers.

The stranger seemed to be ready for an explanation.

"Who are you? What is this place?" Astrid enquired.

"I am Kodano. This is the year 2042. We brought you here in the hope that you can go back to 2005 and prevent this from happening," he said gesturing towards the dismal scene before them.

"But why me? I'm only fifteen!" protested Astrid. "I mean come on . . . What can I do? I'm still at school?"

Kodano didn't respond. Instead he pulled her back in the direction of the warehouse. Astrid stood once more in front of the mirror as Kodano passed her a folded piece of paper.

"This note will guide you. When it is time you'll know what you have to do. It is very important that you persevere and do not give up. You are the world's last hope."

"I . . . I'll do my best," Astrid stammered, more than a little overwhelmed now by the responsibility thrust upon her.

With tears in his eyes, Kodano pushed Astrid into the mirror and in an instant she was gone.

"Goodbye Mum," he whispered. Then he turned and smiled to greet the unfamiliar warmth of the sun through the warehouse windows.

Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

Another Chance

by Tessa Avery

ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:7

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them.
Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**.
Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. What was the mirror in the story?
Why did Kodano smile at the end of the story?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering it to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about this young girl who claims she has travelled into the future. Include a short interview with Astrid.
Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in this story to write a poem or a rap song about the world Astrid visited in 2042.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the setting using the information in the story.
Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place.
Be prepared to explain your STORY MAP to others.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story.
Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF . . .** the world in 2042 was very different from what Astrid saw in this story.
It might be extremely hot, or over-run by wild animals or insects, or . . .
Describe what Astrid would see as she comes out of the warehouse in your version of 2042
OR Draw a picture with labels to explain the problems in this world.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a machine that would clean up the 2042 mess described in the story, or the mess you have just created in your description (Activity 7).
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"We have a responsibility to look after the environment for future generations"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

Another Chance

Short Stories 1: 7 RA 12-13 years

by Tessa Ayley

STORY SUMMARY

Astrid is whisked into a bleak future that appears to have been ruined by man's careless disregard for the environment. The 'stranger', her guide, tells her that she can change the course of history and sends her back with instructions about what to do.

Strong images of the future with a time travel twist at the end - Astrid's connection to the 'stranger' and the instant outworking of her mission.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "Another Chance" - are there any clues about the story?

[To discuss the underlying concepts in this story - 'time travel' and 'environmental concerns'-may reduce the impact of the story]

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: READ - look for CHARACTERS, SETTING, and the PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

Simile

Astrid touched the mirror's surface with her finger. It rippled ***like water in a still lake***. How many times had she stood before it, searching for the courage to plunge through it into . . . what? She reached out again, her mind full of the possibilities of what lay beyond, jolted in an instant back to reality as a hand came through from the other side, grabbed her firmly by the wrist, and pulled her through.

strong adjective

Standing barefooted in a puddle on a concrete floor, with her long brown hair waving annoyingly across her face, she took in her surroundings; a huge deserted warehouse. Dull light seeped through ***tarnished*** windows. A hand touching her shoulder caused an involuntary jump. She spun around to see a tall, strong looking young man standing next to her. The intensity in his face and his obvious agitation alarmed her. "We have to hurry. You don't have much time," was all he said. He wheeled around and headed for a small opening at the far end of the dimly lit room. His expectation that she would follow was ***implicit***.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Astrid
The stranger - strong and young

Settings

Standing in front of the mirror (maybe in her bedroom)
A huge deserted warehouse on the other 'side' of the mirror

Problem

Astrid has been taken through the mirror into the future but this is not the story problem

Setting a Purpose: Where do you think the stranger is taking Astrid?

What is going on?

READ - look for more information about the SETTING and the development of the PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong visual image

As she reached the doorway, an icy blast pierced her thin summer clothing. The stranger paused for a moment, his hesitation suggesting an unseen threat, then plunged outside and began to thread his way through the debris towards the gloomy light at the end of the alleyway. Astrid shuddered then followed. Discarded machinery and vehicles of an unfamiliar design and purpose were stacked unceremoniously in varying states of decay against the grimy walls of buildings that towered on either side of her, blocking out a view of the sky.

personification

Their destination was a disappointment. The ***chaos*** of the alleyway gave way to an equally ***shabby street of crumbling shop facades*** and boarded up windows that had not withstood the attentions of looters. In a deserted courtyard, a ***withered oak tree, once proud and defiant, now bowed and diseased, gasped for one last breath from a foul, heavily laden atmosphere***. Two ***dishevelled vagrants***, taking comfort from the cold around a makeshift fire in a discarded oil drum, glared threateningly at the onlookers.

Setting

Outside the warehouse - a very bleak depressing world

Problem

Still not clear - no clues yet
Some readers may have made some inferences. Encourage them to justify their ideas from the text

Setting a Purpose: *The problem becomes clear in this final section of the story .
READ - look for the PROBLEM, FEELINGS, OUTCOME.*

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

Dialogue provides a change of style after the heavy description

The stranger seemed to be ready for an explanation.
"Who are you? What is this place?" Astrid enquired.
"I am Kodano. This is the year 2042. We brought you here in the hope that you can go back to 2005 and prevent this from happening," he said gesturing towards the dismal scene before them.
"But why me? I'm only fifteen!" protested Astrid. "I mean come on . . . What can I do? I'm still at school?"

Kodano didn't respond. Instead he pulled her back in the direction of the warehouse. Astrid stood once more in front of the mirror as Kodano passed her a folded piece of paper.
"This note will guide you. When it is time you'll know what you have to do. It is very important that you persevere and do not give up. You are the world's last hope."
"I . . . I'll do my best," Astrid stammered, more than a little overwhelmed now by the responsibility thrust upon her.
With tears in his eyes, Kodano pushed Astrid into the mirror and in an instant she was gone.
"Goodbye Mum," he whispered. Then he turned and smiled to greet the unfamiliar warmth of the sun through the warehouse windows.

Setting

The future 2042

Problem

The environment has been destroyed presumably by man's carelessness
Society has broken down - looters and vagrants

Feelings

Astrid feels overwhelmed by the responsibility

Action

What she has to do is contained in the note - we do not know what the action involved

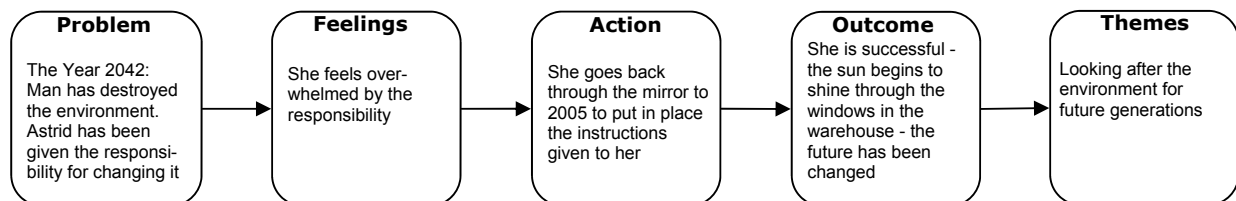
Outcome

Astrid succeeded because the sun came out - the intricacies of Time Travel

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.
Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.
The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Very significant - the main feature of the action.

Characters: Not enough time to develop the characters - emphasis is on the setting.

Story Structure: Time travel twist creates interesting problem. Nice resolution of the problem at the end - immediate outcome.

Theme: Heavy environmental / social responsibility theme.

Language Features: Full of gloomy imagery to convey the state of the world in 2042.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

A BRUSH WITH THE DARK SIDE

BY HILTON AYREY



Notes on Story Structure

Jeremy was upset. He had worked hard on his spelling homework all week, struggling to remember whether the "r" came before or after the "g" in "ergomalfunction". He was sure he had nailed it, but today had been testing day and when he got his test back from his teacher, there was a disappointing message written in Mr Foster's spidery writing . . . "Three out of twenty five. Detention after school. Write out all your words 30 times."

Jeremy and his friend Sam had suspected that Mr Foster was from the dark side for some time. There was his obsession with learning these endless lists of words that everyone was sure he made up. There was also the evil glint in his eye as he handed out yet another of his meaningless research assignments. His personal appearance provided a multitude of clues; the black suit and a thin black tie that he always wore, his black shoes that were always immaculately polished, his perfectly groomed black hair that never moved in a breeze, and the distant, watery look in his eyes as if there was something to hide. The events during detention that afternoon certainly suggested that there was some merit in their suspicions.

It was four o'clock. Jeremy was halfway through "malconstipations" for the 27th time and Sam was struggling with "perifivalium", when the muffled croaking started. It had been a dark gloomy day outside, but suddenly the classroom seemed even gloomier, chilly and foreboding. Mr Foster had stopped pacing back and forth some time ago and had disappeared to do some photocopying when the first croak sent a shiver down the boys' spines.

They froze at their desks, transfixed, unable to move. There it was again; louder this time, and then yet again, somehow more threatening. Sam rose from his desk and so did Jeremy. They were drawn towards the teacher's desk from where the noise originated. They couldn't resist. It had a power over them that demanded obedience. The noise seemed to fill their heads and as they got closer, their nostrils were filled with an unbearable stench. On the floor behind the desk was a plastic container the size of a lunch box, and through the opaque sides the boys could see a green menacing shape, pulsing, throbbing. Jeremy reached down to open the lid...

At that moment the door swung open and slammed against the wall. Mr Foster stood towering over them in the doorway. In his arms was a huge rectangular box shape, the size of a small coffin, with a blood red cover of velvet draped over it.

"Oh . . . boys. You're still here. You gave me quite a fright. I thought you would have gone home long ago and finished all that nonsense sometime over the weekend. Well, since you are here, maybe you could help me with this aquarium. I knew it was somewhere. Found it in the caretaker's shed eventually. I thought we might set up a wetlands habitat for that frog Sidney found in the playground at lunchtime. Now, where did I put the cute little thing . . ."

The sun was shining when the boys stepped out into the playground and headed for home.

"I think we've been reading too much Harry Potter," said Sam with a grin.

In the classroom, hidden by the curtains, Mr Foster watched the boys leave the school grounds. He turned to his desk, unlocked a drawer, and took out a book. The title on the cover was "Mastering the Dark Arts".

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

A BRUSH WITH THE DARK SIDE

BY HILTON AYREY



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:8

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

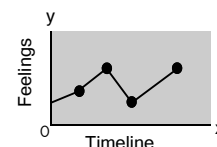
2. Why was Jeremy upset at the beginning of the story?
What was the green menacing shape in the container?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering it to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about the incident in the classroom and the growing concern about the effects of Harry Potter books on children. Include short interviews with Jeremy and Mr Foster. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in this story to write a poem or a rap song about Mr Foster.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY GRAPH:** Show how Jeremy is feeling throughout this story.
The y axis should show feelings : 0 = feeling happy, 5 = feeling angry, frightened
The x axis should be a timeline : 0 = beginning of the story to the end.
The dots on the graph should mark special events in the story. Label what they are.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME



CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF :** "Jeremy reached down to open the lid . . ."
Brainstorm some other directions this story could go in from this point on. Use flow charts. Choose your best idea and rewrite the last part of the story
OR Draw it as a comic strip with speech and thought bubbles
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a DARK SIDE DETECTOR which would enable Jeremy and Sam to be sure about whether Mr Foster was from the Dark Side or not.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.



EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"Books about wizardry and 'the dark arts' are not harmful to children"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ◆ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ◆ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ◆ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ◆ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

A BRUSH WITH THE DARK SIDE

Short Stories 1:8 RA 12-13 years

by Hilton Ayrey

STORY SUMMARY

Two boys are staying behind after school to do detention for their strange teacher. They have had their suspicions about him before but the plot thickens as their imaginations start to run wild.

An abrupt change of mood in the writing style at the end of the story puts everything into its correct perspective - or does it?

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "A Brush with the Dark Side" - are there any clues about the story?

What might 'a brush with the dark side' mean? Have you ever had a brush with the dark side?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for CHARACTERS, SETTING, and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

made up word

strong adjective

Jeremy was upset. He had worked hard on his spelling homework all week, struggling to remember whether the "r" came before or after the "g" in "*ergomalfunction*". He was sure he had nailed it, but today had been testing day and when he got his test back from his teacher, there was a disappointing message written in Mr Foster's *spidery writing* . . . "Three out of twenty five. Detention after school. Write out all your words 30 times".

STORY STRUCTURE

Setting

At school

Characters

Jeremy (schoolboy)

Problem

Jeremy has detention after school

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for new CHARACTERS and development of the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

reference to evil

strong adjectives

Jeremy and his friend Sam had suspected that Mr Foster was from the *dark side* for some time. There was his obsession with learning these endless lists of words that everyone was sure he made up. There was also the evil glint in his eye as he handed out yet another of his meaningless research assignments. His personal appearance provided a multitude of clues; the black suit and a thin black tie that he always wore, his black shoes that were always immaculately polished, his perfectly groomed black hair that never moved in a breeze, and the *distant watery look* in his eyes as if there was something to hide. The events during detention that afternoon certainly suggested that there was some merit in their suspicions.

Characters

Sam—Jeremy's friend

Mr Foster

- strange spelling obsession
- likes to make students suffer (evil glint in his eye)
- black clothes, tie, shiny shoes
- hair never moves in the breeze

Problem

The boys think that Mr Foster is from the 'dark side'.

Setting a Purpose: **What do you think might have happened during detention?**
READ - look for development of the PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

made up word
made up word
strong adjectives
strong adjectives

strong adjective

It was four o'clock. Jeremy was halfway through "*malconstipations*" for the 27th time and Sam was struggling with "*perifivalium*", when the muffled croaking started. It had been a *dark gloomy day* outside, but suddenly the classroom seemed even *gloomier, chilly and foreboding*. Mr Foster had stopped pacing back and forth some time ago and had disappeared to do some photocopying when the first croak sent a shiver down the boys' spines.

They froze at their desks, transfixed, unable to move. There it was again; louder this time, and then yet again, somehow more threatening. Sam rose from his desk and so did Jeremy. They were drawn towards the teacher's desk from where the noise originated. They couldn't resist. It had a power over them that demanded obedience. The noise seemed to fill their heads and as they got closer, their nostrils were filled with an unbearable stench. On the floor behind the desk was a plastic container the size of a lunch box and through the *opaque* sides the boys could see a green menacing shape, pulsing, throbbing. Jeremy reached down to open the lid . . .

Problem development

During detention

- the croaking started
- the room seemed to get gloomier, chilly and foreboding

Feelings

- The boys are afraid; at first they are unable to move

Action

- Drawn to the noise
- Can't resist
- Jeremy must open the container

Setting a Purpose: *How is this going to end?*
READ - look for the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong adjective
strong image

At that moment the door swung open and slammed against the wall. Mr Foster stood **towering** over them in the doorway. In his arms was a huge rectangular box shape, the size of a **small coffin**, with a **blood red cover of velvet** draped over it.

complete change in tone and mood

"Oh . . . boys. You're still here. You gave me quite a fright. I thought you would have gone home long ago and finished all that nonsense sometime over the weekend. Well, since you are here, maybe you could help me with this aquarium. I knew it was somewhere. Found it in the caretaker's shed eventually. I thought we might set up a wetlands habitat for that frog Sidney found in the playground at lunchtime. Now, where did I put the cute little thing . . ."

Outcome

The croaking was a frog that Sidney found at lunchtime
The boys were imagining things

Setting a Purpose: *READ the final two paragraphs to confirm the OUTCOME.*

return to original mood

The sun was shining when the boys stepped out into the playground and headed for home.

"I think we've been reading too much Harry Potter," said Sam with a grin.

In the classroom, hidden by the curtains, Mr Foster watched the boys leave the school grounds. He turned to his desk, unlocked a drawer, and took out a book. The title on the cover was "Mastering the Dark Arts".

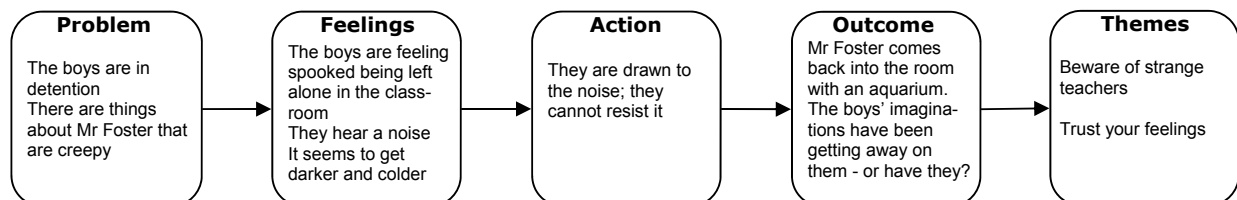
Outcome

or were they ??????

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use "**How Good is this Story?**" on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Main action took place within the classroom - important to the story.

Characters: Mr Foster's character is developed but gets confused by the story twists.

Story Structure: A double twist left the story open at the end. What will happen next? The problem still exists.

Theme: Not a strong theme because dealing with fantasy world concepts (dark arts).

Language Features: Strong imagery creates mood. Tension builds then dissipates with a double twist at the end.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

IN CONTROL by Sandy Qiu

The door opens. A pleasant but condescending voice greets me.
"Good morning Scarlett. I'm Doctor Brownley. Come on in."

She is immaculate, flawless, with her cashmere smooth face and brushed bronze cheeks. Her hair falls past her shoulders, straight and sleek, not a strand out of place. How can she possibly give advice to me? What would she know about the issues I'm supposedly going through? Clearly she has never had a problem with her weight.

She directs me to a couch. I sink firmly into it. To help me feel at ease she begins the small talk, general questions about school and my well-being. It would be good if she quit the patronizing tone of voice and got straight to the point. My replies are thoughtless and blank. I have nothing to say.

I have been here before to see the dietician. I was fine with being just a little chunky but mum made me feel insecure with those random little comments. She didn't know how much it upset me and I never could tell her. The meetings were successful. Counting daily fat points began to pay off. I loved the attention I was getting, especially from my mum. Finally she was proud of me.

"How do you feel about your current weight and appearance?" Doctor Brownley asks.

I sit in silence for a moment, sifting through my thoughts. Suddenly the words come tumbling out.

"I guess I feel fine about the way I look ... sometimes I wish I could be a little thinner but doesn't everyone? I just have to accept the fact that I can't be perfect. I have good days and bad days like everyone. Usually I'm in control and hard on myself but then there are times when I just eat and eat and eat and then I ..."

All of a sudden the room feels hotter; the temperature rises a few degrees. I pull back into my seat, burning, uncomfortable. What was that I just said? Have I said too much? Mum never had the time or patience to listen to me like this. For her sake I've always tried to be in control like her. I feel like I've gone too far.

Hot, I unzip my baggy jersey. I notice Doctor Brownley staring. Her mouth droops in a sympathetic frown, blue eyes turning a cold dull grey. Is that disapproval? Self-consciousness sweeps over me. Panic-stricken I demand a mirror. Doctor Brownley suggests that it is not the right time for that, but, eventually, she gives in to my demand. She points to a full length mirror hanging on the wall. I walk slowly towards it, staring intensely at my reflection. No wonder she looks at me that way. Look at the state I am in. I gather up the hem of my tee-shirt that hides my stomach. It relents, no longer concealing my body.

"I feel so fat," I say to myself quietly. Doctor Brownley interrupts . . .

Scarlett stands staring into the mirror, unaware. Her appearance is skeletal. Her body is emaciated, withered away, nothing more than skin and bone. All that is holding her upright is her bony fragile frame. She appears to teeter, close to collapse. Her haggard face is wrapped in a thin layer of pallid skin. She is ghostly and gaunt. Her cheekbones protrude, her cheeks swallowed into empty pits. She is dehydrated, sucked dry of any life; she smells stale, sickly. She is a shell, a husk, expressionless. Her stomach concaves in food deprived hollowness. Weedy lank hair, lacking nutrition and falling out, tangles limply around her face. With her tee-shirt pulled tightly over her pathetic frame, her ribs are deformed, jolting sharply, struggling not to pierce her skin.

Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

IN CONTROL

by Sandy Qiu

ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:9

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

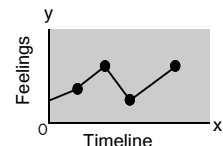
2. Why did the room suddenly feel hot?
What was one of the reasons for the storyteller's condition?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering it to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for TV about the problem of anorexia. Include short interviews with Dr Brownley and the storyteller. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in the last paragraph to help you write a poem or a rap song about the girl in the story or about anorexia in general.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY GRAPH:** Show how the storyteller is feeling during this story.
The y axis should show feelings : 0 = feeling relaxed, happy, 5 = feeling anxious
The x axis should be a timeline : 0 = beginning of the story to the end.
The dots on the graph should mark special events in the story. Label what they are.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME



CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF . . .** the storyteller was suffering from obesity. Rewrite the final paragraph describing her overweight condition.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a new invention that helps you stay at your ideal weight for your age and height at all times.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"Doctor Brownley was not the right person to talk to the storyteller"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

IN CONTROL By Sandy Qiu

Short Stories 1: 9 RA 13-15 years years

STORY SUMMARY

Scarlett is visiting Doctor Brownley. She is suspicious, withdrawn and defensive. A flashback fills in some of the details from her past and then she starts to open up about her weight problem.

The final paragraph reveals the truth of the matter. Scarlett is a severe anorexic.

The perspective of the storyteller (internal dialogue) allows the author to explore the denial associated with this condition.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "In Control" - are there any clues about the story?

Discuss students' experiences with dieting. Girls will probably be more aware of this than boys.

[You may wish to discuss anorexia before reading the text or wait until the end of the story. Depending on students awareness of the problem and their ability to pick up on the inferential clues they may think the girl is overweight which makes the final paragraph a real surprise]

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: READ - look for CHARACTERS, SETTING, and the PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

strong adjective

The door opens. A pleasant but **condescending voice** greets me.

"Good morning Scarlett. I'm Doctor Brownley. Come on in."

metaphor

She is immaculate, **flawless**, with her **cashmere smooth** face and

metaphor

brushed bronze cheeks. Her hair falls past her shoulders, straight and

sleek, not a strand out of place. How can she possibly give advice to me?

What would she know about the issues I'm supposedly going through?

Clearly she has never had a problem with her weight.

strong adjective

strong adjectives

She directs me to a couch. I sink firmly into it. To help me feel at ease she begins the small talk, general questions about school and my well-being.

It would be good if she quit the **patronizing tone of voice** and got

straight to the point. My replies are **thoughtless and blank**. I have

nothing to say.

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

The storyteller
Doctor Brownley

Problem

Storyteller has an appointment with a doctor. It isn't obvious yet what the problem is - probably to do with being overweight.

Feelings

Storyteller doesn't think she will be able to help her
Doesn't like the way the doctor talks to her
Doesn't have anything to say

Setting a Purpose: Why do you think the storyteller feels this way about the doctor?

READ - look for more information about the PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

flashback

I have been here before to see the dietician. I was fine with being just a **little chunky** but mum made me feel insecure with those random little

unusual concept

comments. She didn't know how much it upset me and I never could tell her. The meetings were successful. **Counting daily fat points** began to pay off. I loved the attention I was getting, especially from my mum. Finally she was proud of me.

"How do you feel about your current weight and appearance?" Doctor Brownley asks.

I sit in silence for a moment, sifting through my thoughts. Suddenly the words come tumbling out.

"I guess I feel fine about the way I look ... sometimes I wish I could be a little thinner but doesn't everyone? I just have to accept the fact that I can't be perfect. I have good days and bad days like everyone. Usually I'm in control and hard on myself but then there are times when I just eat and eat and eat and then I ..."

All of a sudden the room feels hotter; the temperature rises a few degrees. I pull back into my seat, burning, uncomfortable. What was that I just said? Have I said too much? Mum never had the time or patience to listen to me like this. For her sake I've always tried to be in control like her. I feel like I've gone too far.

Problem development

History of the weight problem
• was a little chunky
• Mum made comments

Feelings in the past

Felt bad about herself

Action

Got help from a dietician
Went on a diet

Outcome

Lost weight
Mum was proud of her

Feelings

Feels that she has said too much

Setting a Purpose: READ - look for more clarification about the story PROBLEM.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

**strong imagery
personification**

personification

Hot, I unzip my baggy jersey. I notice Doctor Brownley staring. Her mouth droops in a **sympathetic frown**, blue eyes turning a **cold dull grey**. Is that disapproval? Self-consciousness **sweeps over me**. Panic-stricken I demand a mirror. Doctor Brownley suggests that it is not the right time for that, but, eventually, she gives in to my demand. She points to a full length mirror hanging on the wall. I walk slowly towards it, staring intensely at my reflection. No wonder she looks at me that way. Look at the state I am in. I gather up the hem of my tee-shirt that hides my stomach. **It relents**, no longer concealing my body. "I feel so fat," I say to myself quietly. Doctor Brownley interrupts . . .

Feelings

Feels self-conscious

Action

Demands to see herself in a mirror

**Setting a Purpose: How will this end? Brainstorm possibilities.
READ - look for the OUTCOME.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

**Change from first to
third person**

**metaphor
metaphor
strong adjectives**

**strong verbs and
adjectives**

Scarlett stands staring into the mirror, unaware. **Her appearance is skeletal**. Her body is **emaciated**, withered away, nothing more than skin and bone. All that is holding her upright is her bony fragile frame. She appears to teeter, close to collapse. Her haggard face is wrapped in a thin layer of pallid skin. She is ghostly and gaunt. Her cheekbones protrude, her cheeks **swallowed into empty pits**. She is dehydrated, **sucked dry of any life**; she smells stale, sickly. **She is a shell, a husk**, expressionless. **Her stomach concaves in food deprived hollowness**. Weedy lank hair, lacking nutrition and falling out, tangles limply around her face. With her tee-shirt pulled tightly over her pathetic frame, her ribs are deformed, **jolting sharply, struggling not to pierce her skin**.

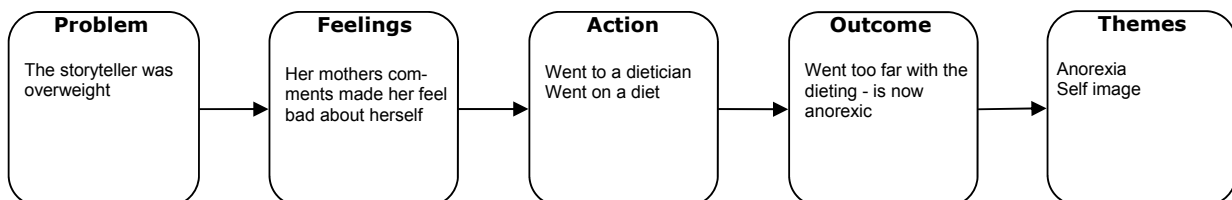
Outcome

The storyteller is severely anorexic

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.
Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.
The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Backdrop to the storytellers inner conflict. Not significant.

Characters: Powerful insight into the storyteller's denial of the problem.

Story Structure: First person internal dialogue disguises the problem. Abrupt change emphasises storytellers distorted perception. No resolution to the problem. The author's intention is to shock the reader.

Theme: Very strong theme.

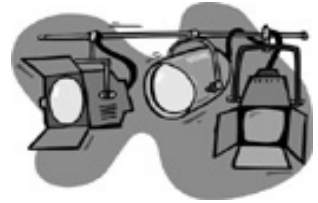
Language Features: First person account lulls the reader. Short sentences used to convey internal dialogue. Use of flashback to provide background. Abrupt change to the third person in the final paragraph provides a powerful statement of the theme - vivid imagery.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

WAITING IN THE WINGS

BY HANNAH CRAMP



Notes on Story Structure

I hurriedly wipe my sweaty palms on the crisp, stark white apron that hangs from my waist. I tug at the hem of the coal black dress sticking out from underneath it, wishing it would grow a few inches longer. It doesn't. I wonder how many others have worn this uniform; have tugged at its hem and wished for the earth to swallow them up.

Somebody jostles past me and I'm jolted back to reality, back to the nightmare scene before me. I struggle to compose myself, forcing my shallow, frequent inhalations to slow down; forcing myself to relax. I take a few deep breathes - in through the nose and out through the mouth. The smell of musty stage curtains fills my nostrils. It's a nostalgic smell. I'm reminded of the countless hours spent rehearsing for this very moment and the thought scares me beyond belief. What if, after all the time and effort, I'm a hopeless failure?

I allow myself ten seconds of absolute terror playing with that thought, before pulling myself together.
"Get a grip," I mutter under my breath, as I dig my fingernails into my palms. I have to stay focussed or I'll miss my cue. I deaden my ears to the wild notions frenzying around in my head, and tune them instead to the lines being spouted on the stage before me.
"Dastardly weather we've been having lately, wouldn't you say Braithwaite?"

My cue is coming up fast, too fast. I rub my tongue against the smooth surface of my teeth getting rid of any excess lipstick. The greasy substance lingers on my tongue along with its metallic taste. My hand, moving of its own accord, picks an imaginary piece of lint off the sleeve of my costume. All the while, my cue grows ever closer. My heart begins to beat at an insane rate. I'm certain that any moment now it's going to jump up my throat and leap from my body completely. With any luck, the butterflies in my stomach will follow suit. I creep forward a few steps so that now the only thing separating me from the crowd of attentive faces is the scarlet stage curtain - heavy and motionless.
"Where has that girl got to? Hilda? HILDA?"
I give an involuntary shudder as I hear those fateful words, calling me onto the stage. I take a deep breath, raise my lowered head, pull back my shoulders, and stride onto the waiting stage.

Blinding lights assail my nocturnal eyes. I am mesmerised by the captivating glare. I cannot blink. I cannot think. My eyes begin to prickle. I am hit by the realisation that if I don't blink soon I will burst into tears - right there, right now, on the stage, in front of everybody. I blink rapidly. The world around me starts to come into focus: the meticulously painted set complete with worn out props, the actors in their gaudy costumes, each holding a carefully practiced pose, reflecting their character.

Their heavily painted faces turn towards me, acknowledging my presence on the stage. Their teacups pause in mid-air, awaiting their drinkers' restored attention. Staring out over the sea of darkness beyond the stage, I can feel the anticipation in the air, a cloying presence that causes tiny beads of sweat to form on my forehead, plastered with foundation. I gulp, pivot to face a seated character, shuffle over to her. My knees dip into a curtsy . . . I take another deep breath, throw a quick prayer heavenwards and proclaim . . .
"More tea Mrs. Jenkins?"

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

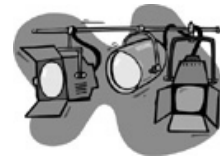
Action

Outcome

Themes

WAITING IN THE WINGS

BY HANNAH CRAMP



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:10

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. Why would people wearing the uniform "wish for the earth to swallow them up"? Why did the storyteller dig her fingernails into her palms?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering it to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a review for TV about the first night performance of the play in this story. Include short interviews with the storyteller and someone from the audience. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your review.
Practise with a friend and be ready to present it to your group or class as a role play.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in the story to write a poem about 'waiting in the wings'.

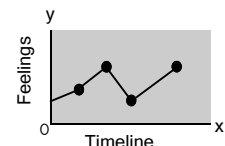
ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY GRAPH:** Show how the main character is feeling during this story.

The y axis should show feelings : 0 = feeling relaxed 5 = feeling nervous, anxious

The x axis should be a timeline : 0 = beginning of the story to the end.

The dots on the graph should mark special events in the story. Label what they are.



6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT IF . . .** the character is not in fact waiting to go on stage.
"I take a deep breath, raise my lowered head, pull back my shoulders, and stride onto the . . ."
Brainstorm as many other possibilities as you can.
Choose your best one. Rewrite your new ending to the story. Draw a matching illustration.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design some sort of machine or appliance that eliminates nervousness in situations like this.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. **SEEING BOTH SIDES**

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

"Being nervous before an important event is a great advantage"

I agree with this statement because ...

I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. **HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?**

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ◆ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ◆ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ◆ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ◆ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

WAITING IN THE WINGS

Short Stories 1:10 RA 13-15 years

BY HANNAH CRAMP

STORY SUMMARY

An actress waits nervously in the wings for her cue to take part in a play. The hours of practice and preparation are about to pay off or are they? All the last minute doubts and fears flood in and then finally the moment of truth arrives.

Very descriptive account of a few moments in real time.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss being nervous before a performance. Get students to share their experiences.

Discuss title "Waiting in the Wings" - are there any clues about the story?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for CHARACTERS, SETTING, and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

personification I hurriedly wipe my sweaty palms on the crisp, stark white apron that hangs from my waist. I tug at the hem of the coal black dress sticking out from underneath it, wishing it would grow a few inches longer. It doesn't. I wonder how many others have worn this uniform; have tugged at its hem and wished for ***the earth to swallow them up.***

strong adjective Somebody jostles past me and I'm jolted back to reality, back to the nightmare scene before me. I struggle to compose myself, forcing my shallow, frequent inhalations to slow down; forcing myself to relax. I take a few deep breathes - in through the nose and out through the mouth. The smell of musty stage curtains fills my nostrils. It's a ***nostalgic*** smell. I'm reminded of the countless hours spent rehearsing for this very moment and the thought scares me beyond belief. What if, after all the time and effort, I'm a hopeless failure?

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

Storyteller

Problem

The storyteller is very nervous waiting for a big moment

Action

Breathes deeply to calm herself

Feelings

Experiences feelings of doubt about her ability to perform the task

Setting a Purpose: **What is the moment that the storyteller is waiting for?**

Brainstorm possibilities. Use the text to justify answers.

READ - look for clarification of the PROBLEM and the character's FEELINGS about it.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong adjective I allow myself ten seconds of absolute terror playing with that thought, before pulling myself together. "Get a grip," I mutter under my breath, as I dig my fingernails into my palms. I have to stay focussed or I'll miss my cue. I deaden my ears to ***the wild notions frenzying around in my head,*** and tune them instead to the lines being spouted on the stage before me. "Dastardly weather we've been having lately, wouldn't you say Braithwaite?"

strong adjectives My cue is coming up fast, too fast. I rub my tongue against the smooth surface of my teeth getting rid of any excess lipstick. The ***greasy*** substance lingers on my tongue along with its ***metallic*** taste. My hand, moving of its own accord, picks an imaginary piece of lint off the sleeve of my costume. All the while, my cue grows ever closer. My heart begins to beat at an insane rate. I'm certain that any moment now it's going to ***jump up my throat and leap from my body completely.*** With any luck, the butterflies in my stomach will follow suit. I creep forward a few steps so that now the only thing separating me from the crowd of attentive faces is the scarlet stage curtain - heavy and motionless. "Where has that girl got to? Hilda? HILDA?" I give an involuntary shudder as I hear those fateful words, calling me onto the stage. I take a deep breath, raise my lowered head, pull back my shoulders, and stride onto the waiting stage.

Action

Talks to herself
Digs her fingernails into her palms
Attempts to 'pull herself together' and tune into what is happening

Feelings

Experiences physical responses as the moment gets closer

- heart beats fast
- butterflies in the stomach

Action

She makes her entrance on stage

Problem clarification

The storyteller is waiting to go on stage. She has a part in a play.

Setting a Purpose: **Brainstorm what might happen next?**

READ - look for the further ACTION and the OUTCOME..

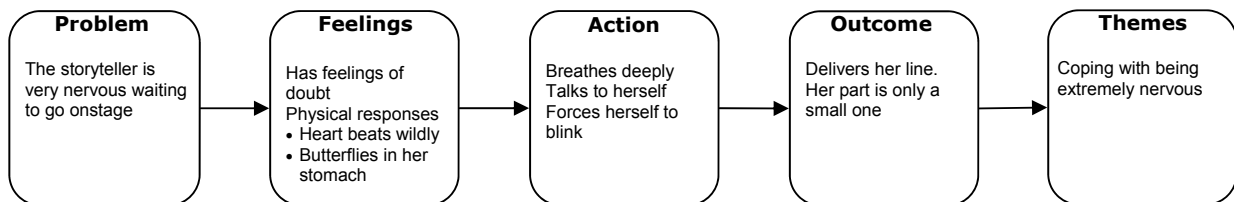
Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong verb	Blinding lights assail my nocturnal eyes. I am mesmerised by the captivating glare of the lights. I cannot blink. I cannot think. My eyes	Feelings Dazzled by the lights Time seems to pass slowly She is very aware of all the detail around her
strong verb	begin to prickle . I am hit by the realisation that if I don't blink soon I will burst into tears - right there, right now, on the stage, in front of everybody. I blink rapidly. The world around me starts to come into focus: the	Action Forces herself to blink
strong descriptive adjectives	meticulously painted set complete with worn out props, the actors in their gaudy costumes, each holding a carefully practiced pose, reflecting their character.	
personification	Their heavily painted faces turn towards me, acknowledging my presence on the stage. Their teacups pause in mid-air, awaiting their drinkers' restored attention.	
metaphor strong adjective + noun	Staring out over the sea of darkness beyond the stage, I can feel the anticipation in the air, a cloying presence that causes tiny beads of sweat to form on my forehead, plastered with foundation. I gulp, pivot to face a seated character, shuffle over to her. My knees dip into a curtsy I take another deep breath, throw a quick prayer heavenwards and proclaim "More tea Mrs. Jenkins?"	Outcome She succeeds in delivering her line - it appears that her part is only a very small one

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.
Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.
The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Very important - the stage - central to the story problem

Characters: The main characters internal struggle is well described - character is not developed beyond this

Story Structure: Gradual build up of tension - nice twist at the end puts everything into perspective - releases tension

Theme: Common theme (nervousness before a performance) - easy for the reader to identify with

Language Features: Very descriptive - slow passage of time - choice of first person - internal dialogue makes the writing very effective

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

THE MAIN EVENT

ADAPTED FROM A POLITICALLY INCORRECT STORY BY BRYAN BLACK

The music, thumping at the senses like a symphony of pneumatic drills, builds to a crescendo as fireworks explode, then abandons the auditorium to mute darkness. Time, taking a well earned rest, passes slowly . . . then light emerges, peacefully, in the centre of the arena, silhouetting yet unrevealing.

"Are you ready to RUMBLE?!!"

The crowd, a loose assortment of inattentive boofheads, crystallises into an expectant oneness; a panther newly aware of its prey, focussed, malevolent, then exploding into an intense roar.

Before the ring announcer has a chance to make a dignified exit, Fat-Boy-Slam charges at Rodney Roadkill, two fingers extended for the eye stab, intent on grandstanding this young upstart. The referee, deliberately twelve sizes too small, leaps between the living cartoons that masquerade as wrestlers and the fat men subside into their corners like phlegm down a plughole.

Visibly shaken to the full extent of his D-grade acting ability, the ring announcer is unceremoniously removed, regretting as always his decision not to go to acting school, or any sort of school for that matter. A camera beams the lifetime of disappointment etched on his face to an alleged television audience of millions, and a world away televisual leeches savour the taste of his failure and forget for just a moment their own inadequacies.

The wrestlers gingerly circle each other, oblivious to the screaming morons yelling abuse; straining to recall the script and hoping against hope that their opponent has remembered to eat a fresh mint prior to the bout. On both counts they are destined for disappointment.

Fat-Boy-Slam, painfully aware that his star is beginning to wane and that he needs to produce a crowd pleasing performance to bolster his sagging (in more ways than one) profile, offers an ambitious drop-kick, which is instantly rewarded by a stiff arm to the neck from Rodney Roadkill, followed by a piledriver into the canvas, delivered with the disdain usually reserved for politicians and used car salesmen.

Strutting the ring, Rodney Roadkill roars the prehistoric grunts of his profession to the frenzied crowd, then delivers a shuddering body slam to his prone opponent. Fat-Boy-Slam, privy to an alarming close-up of Rodney's crumpled and wax encrusted ear, chooses the moment to clarify the situation. "This is my bout, you garlic munching drop-kick," he snarls, and head butts his opponent to reinforce his point.

Roadkill Rod leaps to his feet, running in square circles, clutching the petrified passionfruit that is his head, as the referee screams falsetto rebukes to the now conveniently deaf combatant, Fat-Boy-Slam.

With the referee suitably distracted, it is time for a little innovation. Fat-Boy-Slam reaches inside his sweat drenched tights, pulls out a foreign object and waves his questionable ally to camera three for everyone else to see . . . rock salt! Fat-Boy-Slam's podgy fingers work at the bag of rock salt, feverishly attempting to liberate its contents. Rodney Roadkill, about to experience an eye-watering moment, wanders the canvas faking non-understanding of the crowd's plaintive warnings.

High above in the office overlooking the ring, protected by one way mirrors and sound-absorbent tiles, the owner of the wrestling circuit and the cable TV executives sit at a large oval table; laptops flickering, designer suits and poker faces attempting to disguise the greed yelling inside their heads, as their pathetic puppets dance below.

"Time to renegotiate the television rights for the upcoming season gentlemen." And so, after the preliminaries in the ring below, the wrestling begins.



Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

THE MAIN EVENT

ADAPTED FROM A POLITICALLY INCORRECT STORY BY BRYAN BLACK



ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:11

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**. Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

2. Why are the people at the Pro Wrestling match referred to as boofheads? Fat-Boy-Slam has "a sagging profile". Explain what this means?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering it to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a news item for a TV sports programme on the fight between Fat-Boy-Slam and Rodney Roadkill. Include at least 2 short interviews with some of the characters or someone from the audience. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in the story to write a poem or rap song about Pro Wrestling.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY MAP:** Draw a story map of the setting using the information in the story. Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place. Be prepared to explain your STORY MAP to others.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME

CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT COMES NEXT:** How does the fight between Fat-Boy-Slam and Rodney Roadkill end? Write your own ending to the wrestling bout. Try to continue in the same writing style that the author has used.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design the ultimate wrestler. Give him (or her) a name and design a matching costume.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"Pro Wrestling is not a sport"

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...	I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

THE MAIN EVENT

Short Stories 1:11 RA 15-16 years

BY BRYAN BLACK

STORY SUMMARY

All the buffoonery of the Pro Wrestling circuit is described as Fat-Boy Slam and Rodney Roadkill battle it out in the wrestling ring following a well worn script. Fat-Boy-Slam is worried about his waning popularity and looks to introduce some new moves.

Meanwhile in the office above the ring the real wrestling takes place as the promoters and TV moguls engage in negotiating the fees for the broadcasting rights to a new season.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss title "The Main Event" - are there any clues about the story?

Discuss Pro Wrestling. What do they know about it? Is it real or fake?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for the SETTING and the CHARACTERS.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES
simile
personification

strong adjectives

metaphor

The music, thumping at the senses ***like a symphony of pneumatic drills***, builds to a crescendo as fireworks explode, then abandons the auditorium to mute darkness. ***Time, taking a well earned rest***, passes slowly . . . then light emerges, peacefully, in the centre of the arena, ***silhouetting yet unrevealing***.

"Are you ready to RUMBLE?!!"

The crowd, a loose assortment of inattentive boofheads, crystallises into an expectant oneness; ***a panther newly aware of its prey, focussed, malevolent***, then exploding into an intense roar.

STORY STRUCTURE

Setting

An auditorium set up for a fight (wrestling) ***"Are you ready to rumble?"***

Minor Characters

The crowd
- ***Inattentive boofheads***

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for more information about the SETTING (the wrestling world) the CHARACTERS (the people that inhabit wrestling circles)**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

metaphor

simile

Before the ring announcer has a chance to make a dignified exit, Fat-Boy-Slam charges at Rodney Roadkill, two fingers extended for the eye stab, ***intent on grandstanding this young upstart***. The referee, deliberately twelve sizes too small, leaps between the ***living cartoons*** that masquerade as wrestlers and the fat men subside into their corners ***like phlegm down a plughole***.

strong verb

strong adjective + noun

Visibly shaken to the full extent of his D-grade acting ability, the ring announcer is unceremoniously removed, regretting as always his decision not to go to acting school, or any sort of school for that matter. A camera beams the lifetime of disappointment ***etched*** on his face to an alleged television audience of millions, and a world away ***televisual leeches*** savour the taste of his failure and forget for just a moment their own inadequacies.

Characters

Fat-Boy-Slam - wrestler
Rodney Roadkill - younger
- an 'upstart'
Referee - small
Ring announcer - disappointed by life experiences
TV audience - people who use TV to escape from the reality of their own failures

Setting a Purpose: **Brainstorm possibilities for the story problem. READ - look for the PROBLEM and the FEELINGS of the characters.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong verb

metaphor

strong image

The wrestlers gingerly circle each other, oblivious to the screaming morons yelling abuse; ***straining to recall the script*** and hoping against hope that their opponent has remembered to eat a fresh mint prior to the bout. On both counts they are destined for disappointment.

Fat-Boy-Slam, painfully aware that his ***star is beginning to wane*** and that he needs to produce a crowd pleasing performance to bolster his sagging (in more ways than one) profile, offers an ambitious drop-kick, which is instantly rewarded by a stiff arm to the neck from Rodney Roadkill, followed by a piledriver into the canvas, ***delivered with the disdain usually reserved for politicians and used car salesmen***.

Problem

Fat-Boy-Slam is over the hill. He needs to get the attention of the crowd with a good performance

Feelings

Knows he has to put on a good show

Action

Tries to be aggressive
Gets hammered

Setting a Purpose: *What will Fat-Boy-Slam do next? Brainstorm possibilities.*
READ - look for the further ACTION and the OUTCOME.

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong adjective Strutting the ring, Rodney Roadkill roars the **prehistoric grunts** of his profession to the frenzied crowd, then delivers a shuddering body slam to his prone opponent. Fat-Boy-Slam, privy to an alarming close-up of Rodney's crumpled and wax encrusted ear, chooses the moment to clarify the situation.

"This is my bout, you garlic munching drop-kick," he snarls, and head butts his opponent to reinforce his point.

alliteration Roadkill Rod leaps to his feet, running in square circles, clutching the **petrified passionfruit** that is his head, as the referee screams falsetto rebukes to the now conveniently deaf combatant, Fat-Boy-Slam.

With the referee suitably distracted, it is time for a little innovation. Fat-Boy-Slam reaches inside his sweat drenched tights, pulls out a foreign object and waves his questionable ally to camera three for every-one else to see rock salt! Fat-Boy-Slam's podgy fingers work at the bag of rock salt, feverishly attempting to **liberate its contents**. Rodney Roadkill, about to experience an eye-watering moment, wanders the canvas faking non-understanding of the crowd's plaintive warnings.

Action

Fat-Boy-Slam brings out some dubious moves to get the attention he needs

- headbutt - illegal?
 - rock salt which he intends to rub in his opponents eyes
- He plays to the camera

Setting a Purpose: *How will this end? Brainstorm possibilities.*
READ - look for the OUTCOME.

alliteration High above in the office overlooking the ring, protected by one way mirrors and sound-absorbent tiles, the owner of the wrestling circuit and the cable TV executives sit at a large oval table; laptops flickering, designer suits and poker faces attempting to disguise the greed yelling inside their heads, as their **pathetic puppets** dance below.

"Time to renegotiate the television rights for the upcoming season gentlemen." And so, after the preliminaries in the ring below, the wrestling begins.

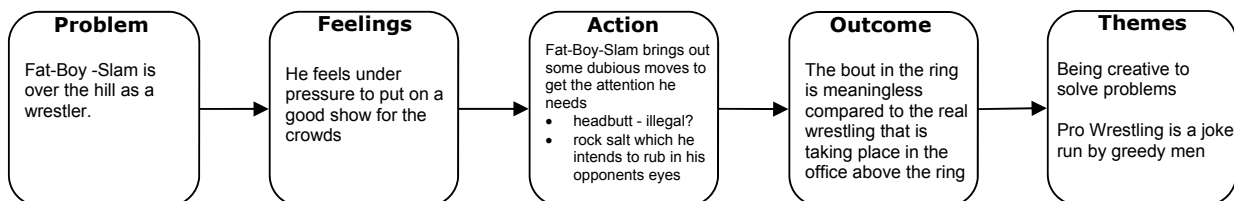
Outcome

The bout in the ring is meaningless compared to the real wrestling that is taking place in the office above the ring

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10. Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion. The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Initial description sets the scene well

Characters: Purposely portrayed as cartoon characters to highlight the final impact

Story Structure: Conflict between the old pro and the young pretender is just a backdrop for the statement made in the final paragraph

Theme: Ironic look at this type of entertainment

Language Features: Imagery and choice of words capture the buffoonery of the action - like a comic book.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

GOING BALLISTIC

BY BRYAN BLACK

He tentatively jumped out of the hole he was sheltering in, and sat snugly in his starting position. Before he could orientate himself, something smacked him in the back and he shot forward involuntarily, like the first explosion of fireworks – bright lit fury.

He would have smacked the rubber-necked, back-jabbing coward that got him from behind right back if he could have seen him, but he couldn't see anything other than a terrifying flashing light. He hurtled down a narrow chute, then horror – no more chute. He free-fell for what seemed like an eternity, landing out of control, skidding and rolling towards a couple of hard looking reprobates [expletive!]

Why couldn't he skid and roll towards a couple of soft looking reprobates? Smack! The first reprobate, with fixed grimacing smile, shoved him over to the second reprobate. Damn! Twins. The second reprobate, with fixed grimacing smile, shoved him back to the first reprobate. Unfortunately they were too stupid to get bored with this game, so he shot back and forth fifteen times before the morons' aim failed them. He got away.

Where to go? He drifted downhill, confused and disorientated, looking for a friendly face, a helpful guide, a place of refuge . . . where to go?

He entered an alleyway. Was that an ambulance he could hear clanging in the distance? He could sense a presence he could not see. Better speed up. Around the bend. Something was drawing him on – magnetic, irresistible. Was this mind control? Could he break the spell? He was out of the alleyway but accelerating towards an open pit – and, though with everything inside him he wanted to stop, there was nothing of him that could make him stop [worse expletive!].

A well-meaning, spongy, dolphin-loving, pair of individuals made a belated attempt to help him away from the ultimate terror, but having failed, returned to their safe warm housing and their stupor.

He was falling. Shrill noise, darkness. No, not darkness. A dim, red light. He bitterly reflected that his life would flash before him about now, if he had had a life. Bang – at last a bit of luck. Miraculously he had landed on some sort of underground monorail, eerie and void. He realised he wasn't alone [mild expletive] but this time no uneasy feeling fell on his brutalised body. He wondered why.

A gentle nudge behind him brought him out of his pondering state. He realised he had involuntarily joined a queue. He was ushered into a large room where several others were lying around. The low murmur subsided as he emerged; all attention was focused on him. A knowing silence hung in the air. Here he felt he was among others who would empathise with his experience.

"Congratulations, son, on surviving your first ride as a ball in an Entertronics Pinball Machine!" A rousing cheer burst out, but was reduced abruptly to silence. The ominous sound of a two dollar coin in the start mechanism triggered the terror of the bright flashing lights. When the magnetic arm came to make a pick-up, camaraderie – like leftover dessert – mysteriously disappeared and he realized that his only 'mates' in the world had hearts of steel [list of expletives exhausted].

Notes on Story Structure

Characters

Setting

Problem

Feelings

Action

Outcome

Themes

GOING BALLISTIC

BY BRYAN BLACK

ACTIVITIES

Short Stories 1:12

REMEMBERING - What are the facts

1. Make a list of all the characters in the story and all the facts you can find out about them. Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**.
Put the character's name and a drawing of them at the centre of the web.

UNDERSTANDING - Reading between the lines

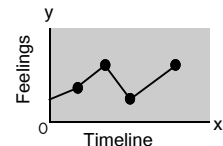
2. What smacked the storyteller in the back at the beginning of the story?
Why did he think his "mates" had hearts of steel?
For each answer include a quote from the story to support your ideas.
Write your own question that requires the person answering it to read between the lines.

APPLYING - Using what you know from the story

3. **NEWSFLASH:** Write a human interest item for the TV news on the life of a pinball. Include at least 2 short interviews with the pinball in the story, an older experienced pinball, one of the 'hard looking reprobates', a pinball player, or anyone else connected to the story. Remember to write a strong wrap-up to end your news story.
4. **POETRY:** Use the description in the story to write a poem about the pinball's experience.

ANALYSING - Breaking down the story to show how it works

5. **STORY GRAPH:** Show how the pinball is feeling throughout this story.
The y axis should show feelings : 0 = feeling relaxed, happy, 5 = feeling frightened, anxious
The x axis should be a timeline : 0 = beginning of the story to the end.
The dots on the graph should mark special events in the story. Label what they are.
6. Create a **STORY WEB**. You may have started this or talked about it when you read the story. Include ... CHARACTERS → SETTING → PROBLEM → FEELINGS → ACTION → OUTCOME



CREATING - Coming up with new ideas

7. **WHAT COMES NEXT:** How can the pinball escape this terrifying, soul destroying life? Write the next part of the story . . . maybe a pinball revolution? Try to continue the same writing style that the author has used.
8. **DESIGN BRIEF:** Design a new pinball game with lots of interesting features for the main character in this story that will make his life 'meaningful'.
Label your drawings or write descriptions to explain your interesting ideas.

EVALUATING - Exploring ideas and rating stories

9. SEEING BOTH SIDES

"There should be more to life than doing the same thing over and over again."

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with this statement.

I agree with this statement because ...

I disagree with this statement because ...

Share your ideas with other people in your group. Ask if you can present a short debate.

10. HOW GOOD IS THIS STORY?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these criteria (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)

- ♦ **CHARACTERS** - Has the author created interesting characters? How?
- ♦ **STORY STRUCTURE** - Does the story have an interesting problem and a satisfying ending?
- ♦ **LANGUAGE FEATURES** - Has the author used words in an interesting way to tell the story?
- ♦ **THEME** - Does this story have something important to say about how people think and behave?

Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given it.

LESSON PLAN

GOING BALLISTIC

Short Stories 1: 12 RA 15-16 years

BY BRYAN BLACK

STORY SUMMARY

A frightening journey full of surprises and unknown dangers. There are clues throughout the story about who the subject of the story is (a ball in a pinball machine) but it is not until the final paragraph that the true identity is revealed.

A good example of personification of an inanimate object.

LEARNING OUTCOMES - choose from the list on page 62 according to the needs of your students

BEFORE READING DISCUSSION: Accessing prior knowledge and personal experiences

Discuss students' experiences being in unfamiliar places not knowing what is going on around them.

Discuss title "Going Ballistic" - are there any clues about the story?

GUIDED SILENT READING PROCESS - follow this three step process for each chunk of text (more details page 5)

Step One: SET A PURPOSE and READ *What to look for when you read this passage.*

Step Two: DETAILED RETELLING *Making sure we have got the message right.*

Step Three: ADD to STORY WEB *Discuss new information about characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome.*

Bold Italics = strong language features, vocabulary or concepts that provide interest and may present roadblocks to comprehension.

Setting a Purpose: **READ - look for CHARACTERS, SETTING, and the PROBLEM.**

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

LANGUAGE FEATURES

He **tentatively** jumped out of the hole he was sheltering in, and sat snugly in his starting position. Before he could orientate himself, something smacked him in the back and he shot forward **involuntarily**, *simile* **like the first explosion of fireworks** – bright lit fury.

Reprobate = A morally undisciplined person

Expletive = an exclamation or oath, a swear word

He would have smacked the rubber-necked, back-jabbing coward that got him from behind right back if he could have seen him, but he couldn't see anything other than a terrifying flashing light. He hurtled down a narrow chute, then horror – no more chute. He free-fell for what seemed like an eternity, landing out of control, skidding and rolling towards a couple of **hard looking reprobates** **[expletive!]**

STORY STRUCTURE

Characters

'He' - subject of the story

Setting

Flashing lights, unfamiliar sights
No real clues about where this is taking place

Problem

The subject is started on a journey in an unfamiliar place, confronted by flashing lights and unpleasant obstacles

Setting a Purpose: **Who is the storyteller? What is happening?**

Brainstorm possibilities

READ - look for more clues about CHARACTERS, SETTING, and development of the PROBLEM

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong adjectives

repetition

Why couldn't he skid and roll towards a couple of soft looking reprobates? Smack! The first reprobate, with **fixed grimacing** smile, shoved him over to the second reprobate. Damn! Twins. The second reprobate, with **fixed grimacing** smile, shoved him back to the first reprobate. Unfortunately they were too stupid to get bored with this game, so he shot back and forth fifteen times before the morons' aim failed them. He got away.

Repeated rhetorical question

Where to go? He drifted downhill, confused and disorientated, looking for a friendly face, a helpful guide, a **place of refuge** . . . where to go?

He entered an alleyway. Was that an ambulance he could hear clanging in the distance? He could sense a presence he could not see. Better speed up. Around the bend. Something was drawing him on – magnetic, irresistible. Was this mind control? Could he break the spell? He was out of the alleyway but accelerating towards an open pit – and, though with everything inside him he wanted to stop, there was nothing of him that could make him stop [worse expletive!].

Feelings

Confused and disoriented

Action

Continues on his journey. He doesn't appear to have any options but to go on.

Setting a Purpose: *Further prediction about the problem which is still not obvious*
READ - look for the further ACTION and the OUTCOME

Fast Finishers - Use the margin to make notes for your story web

strong adjectives

A well-meaning, spongy, dolphin-loving, pair of individuals made a belated attempt to help him away from the ultimate terror, but having failed, returned to their safe warm housing and their stupor.

He was falling. Shrill noise, darkness. No, not darkness. A dim, red light. He bitterly reflected that his life would flash before him about now, if he had had a life. Bang – at last a bit of luck. Miraculously he had landed on some sort of underground monorail, **eerie and void**. He realised he wasn't alone [mild expletive] but this time no uneasy feeling fell on his brutalised body. He wondered why.

metaphor

A gentle nudge behind him brought him out of his pondering state. He realised he had involuntarily joined a queue. He was ushered into a large room where several others were lying around. The low murmur subsided as he emerged; all attention was focused on him. **A knowing silence hung in the air**. Here he felt he was among others who would **empathise** with his experience.

Action

The journey continues

Setting a Purpose: *How will this end? Brainstorm possibilities*
READ - look for the OUTCOME

**simile
metaphor**

"Congratulations, son, on surviving your first ride as a ball in an **Entertronics Pinball Machine!**" A rousing cheer burst out, but was reduced abruptly to silence. The ominous sound of a two dollar coin in the start mechanism triggered the terror of the bright flashing lights. When the magnetic arm came to make a pick-up, **camaraderie – like leftover dessert** – mysteriously disappeared and he realized that his only 'mates' in the world had **hearts of steel** [list of expletives exhausted].

Problem

The subject is a new ball in a pinball machine

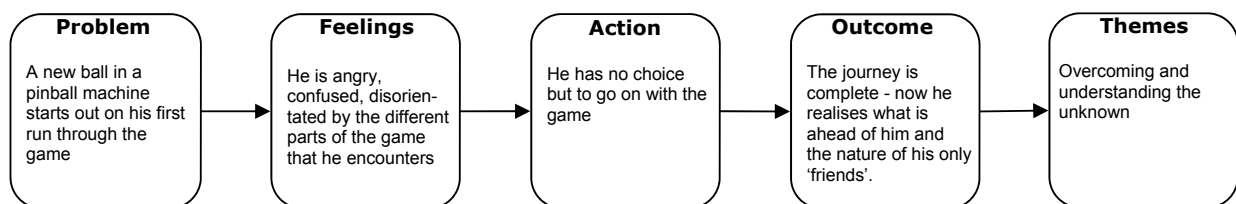
Outcome

The journey is complete. A full realisation for the subject of what his 'life' is about.

AFTER READING DISCUSSION

1. Story Structure : Review the story web now that the whole story has been read

- Summarise the main problem and how the characters deal with it (see suggestions below)
- What was the story about? Is there a message? Is there something we can learn from this? (theme)



2. Story Evaluation : What has the author done to try and make this a good story?

This is aimed at developing the language and the ability to critique the short story genre relating directly to Follow-up Activity 10.

Use **"How Good is this Story?"** on page 69 as a basis for this discussion.

The following are the sort of comments which the teacher should be looking for.

Setting: Very important - only revealed at the end. A novel choice of setting.

Characters: Well developed for an inanimate object

Story Structure: Tension builds but the problem is obscure. Only comes together at the end but the effect is clever.

Theme: Not a strong theme. Experiencing the unknown is a familiar experience.

Language Features: Third person mixed with internal dialogue gives an innovative feel to the narration. Good use of simile and metaphor.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES - Using Bloom's Taxonomy

- Go through the ACTIVITIES sheet with your students
- Brainstorm and discuss ideas, model activities where necessary
- Assign activities or allow choice depending on time constraints and / or the needs of your students

APPENDIX :

Learning Outcomes, Charts, and Exemplars



LESSON PLANNING

- ◆ Learning Outcomes 62



COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

- ◆ CSI Teaching Charts 63



FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES - exemplars

- ◆ Activity 1 : Character Web 66
 - ◆ Activity 5 : Story Graph 66
 - ◆ Activity 5 : Story Map 67
 - ◆ Activity 6 : Story Web 67
 - ◆ Activity 9 : Seeing both sides 68
 - ◆ Activity 10 : How Good is this Story 68
 - ◆ Activity 10 : Criteria for Story Evaluation 69
-



LESSON PLANNING

Learning Outcomes and Success Criteria

Here is a list that applies specifically to the GSR reading process outlined in this resource. The emphasis is on the development of comprehension strategies. These Learning Outcomes can be easily linked back to the Achievement Objectives in the New Zealand English curriculum.

SENTENCE LEVEL COMPREHENSION

LEARNING OUTCOME:

1. Monitor own reading for comprehension

I will know I can do this if, when I am reading, I can ...

- ◆ Put sentences in my own words using "I think that means..." to check whether I have got the message right
- ◆ Recognise that there are roadblocks (I haven't got the message right)

LEARNING OUTCOME:

2. Use the Deep Five comprehension strategies to check and clarify meaning, and to overcome roadblocks to comprehension

I will know I can do this if, when I am reading, I can ...

- ◆ Make connections to something I already know to clarify ideas
- ◆ Visualise what the words are saying
- ◆ Make connections to something somewhere else in the story
- ◆ Ask myself questions about the story
- ◆ Form and revise an hypothesis about what is going on in the story

"BIG PICTURE" TEXT LEVEL COMPREHENSION

LEARNING OUTCOME:

3. Identify Narrative Text Structure (Characters, Setting, Problem, Feelings, Action, Outcome, Theme)

I will know I can do this if, when I am reading, I can ...

- ◆ Identify the PROBLEM, FEELINGS, ACTION, OUTCOME of the story

LEARNING OUTCOME:

4. Demonstrate the use of Bloom's Thinking Skills

I will know I can do this if I can ...

- ◆ Use the information in the story correctly to make a poster or write a letter (Application)
- ◆ Create an accurate story map, story graph, and story web using story information (Analysis)
- ◆ Show a valid "other point of view" for one of the characters in the story (Synthesis)
- ◆ Design a valid solution to a problem raised in the story (Synthesis)
- ◆ Present both sides to an argument about an issue raised in the story (Evaluation)
- ◆ Rate the story based on the criteria given and justify my rating (Evaluation)



COMPREHENSION STRATEGY INSTRUCTION

Charts for teaching "The Three Steps" - Narrative text

For more further support material and video tutorials on Comprehension Strategy Instruction, visit our website www.handyres.com

The following charts are designed to be used with groups during reading instruction.

CHART 1

You can provide a laminated copy of this chart for each student to use during the initial phase of Comprehension Strategy Instruction.

Purpose:

A constant visual reminder of the Three Steps.

A screen to cover the next chunk of text (discourages reading on).

A marker to help students find and keep the place during detailed retelling.

CHART 2

This is an expanded version of CHART 1 including all the comprehension strategies. Use this only once the initial "I think that means..." phase is well established.

Continue to use as text marker and text screen.

CHART 3

An outline of the story structure or Story Web (Step 3) to use as a whole class reminder (A3).

Chart One

THE THREE STEPS

STEP 1 : Read Silently

Use your strategies to make sure you understand



STEP 2 : Detailed Retelling

Start with

"I think that means"

Check whether you understand the message by putting it in your own words



STEP 3 : Add to the Story Web

What new information have we found?

Characters and Setting - Who Where When

Problem - A conflict for the characters

Feelings - How the characters FEEL about the problem

Action - What the characters DO to try to solve the problem

Outcome - How it all works out

Theme - Why did the author write this story?

What does this story tell us about the way people think and act

Chart Two

THE THREE STEPS

STEP 1 : Read Silently

Use your strategies to make sure you understand



STEP 2 : Detailed Retelling

Start with

"I think that means"

Check whether you understand the message by putting it in your own words



Use the DEEP FIVE comprehension strategies to overcome roadblocks

1. Make a connection to something you know

"I know that because . . ."

2. Visualise what the words are saying

"I have a picture in my head of . . ."

3. Make a connection to something else in the text

"In the last paragraph it said that . . ."

4. Ask questions about the information

"I wonder why . . . ?"

5. Form an hypothesis about what is going on

"I think this is because . . ."



STEP 3 : Add to the Story Web

What new information have we found?

Characters and Setting - Who Where When

Problem - A conflict for the characters

Feelings - How the characters FEEL about the problem

Action - What the characters DO to try to solve the problem

Outcome - How it all works out

Theme - Why did the author write this story?

What does this story tell us about the way people think and act

Chart 3

We are learning to identify the text structure in short stories



STORY WEB

Finding the story structure



Characters and Setting

Who Where and When



Problem

A conflict for the character(s)



Feelings

How the characters FEEL about the problem



Action

What the characters DO about the problem



Outcome

How it all works out



Theme

*Why did the author write this story?
What does it tell us about the way people think and act?*



FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

using Bloom's Taxonomy

Here are some exemplars of the Activities this resource.
Use these to establish the requirements of the task with
your learners.

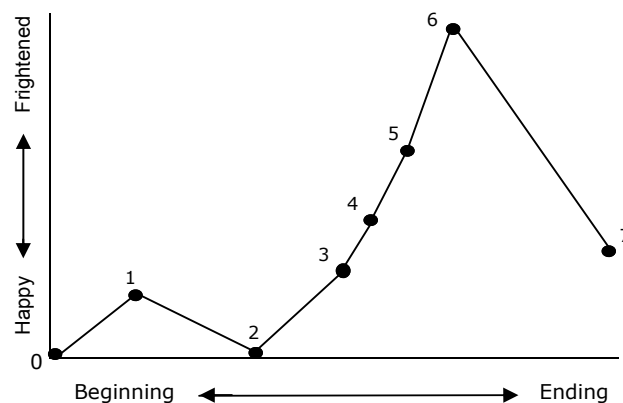
ACTIVITY 1: Character Web - Little Red Riding Hood

Choose a main character and show the information you have found on a **CHARACTER WEB**.



ACTIVITY 5: Story Graph - Little Red Riding Hood

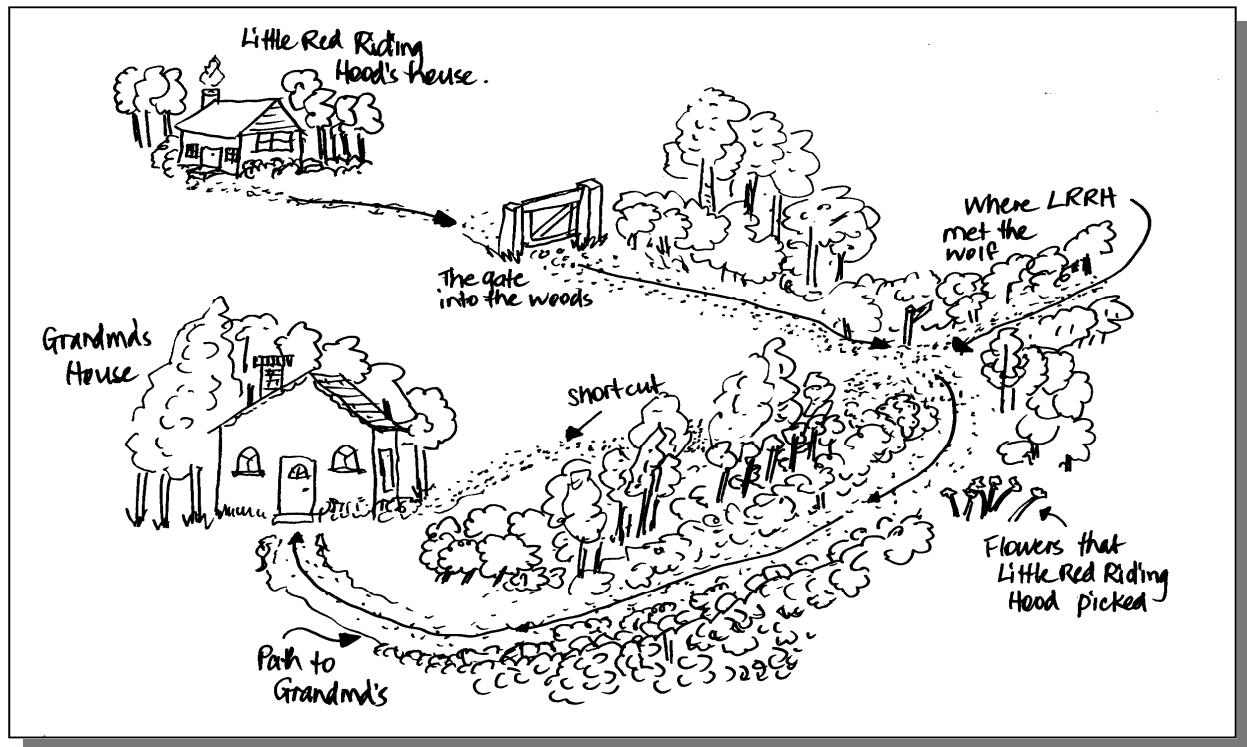
Draw a **STORY GRAPH** showing how Little Red Riding Hood is feeling throughout the story.



- 0 = At home
- 1 = Meets the wolf in the woods
- 2 = Arrives at Grandma's house
- 3 = Notices Grandma's hands
- 4 = Notices Grandma's eyes
- 5 = Notices Grandma's teeth
- 6 = Realises Grandma is the wolf
- 7 = Is rescued by the woodcutter

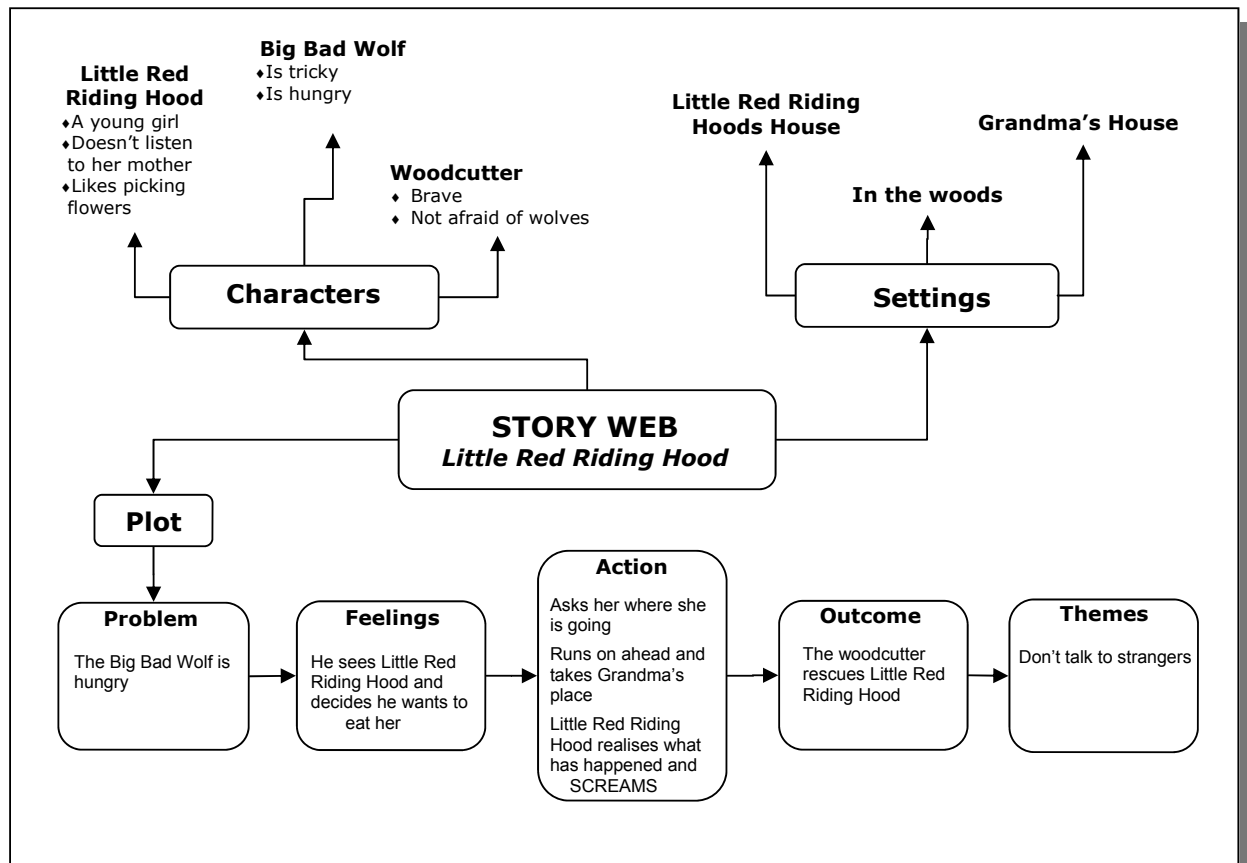
ACTIVITY 5: Story Map - Little Red Riding Hood

Draw a **STORY MAP** connecting all the settings in the story Little Red Riding Hood.
Use labels to show the places mentioned and the events that took place.



ACTIVITY 6: Story Web - Little Red Riding Hood

Draw a **STORY WEB** including characters, setting, problem, feelings, action, outcome, themes.



ACTIVITY 9: Seeing Both Sides - Little Red Riding Hood

Make a chart and list your reasons for agreeing and disagreeing with the statement given.

9. Seeing both sides

"Little Red Riding Hood should not have gone to visit her Grandmother on her own"

I agree with this statement because.....

1. It is way too dangerous these days to let young girls do anything on their own. There are all sorts of creeps around
2. Its not good enough to tell a child not to talk to strangers and expect them to do it. Young children are way too irresponsible - they forget what the parents tell them straight away.
3. Her mother was probably too busy to go herself. That's the problem today - parents are always too busy to do the things they should be doing. She should have been looking after her own mother instead of expecting LRRH to do it.
4. What was old grandmother doing living by herself in the forest anyway. If she was that sick she should have been in an old people's home or living with her mother.

I disagree with this statement because....

1. Children should be able to go and visit their grandmother on their own without having to be afraid of strangers.
2. There should be better police patrols in the forest to make sure it is a safe place - that's what we pay our taxes for.
3. You have to be able to take risks or you will never learn anything about how to keep yourself safe.
4. She would have been fine if she had listened to what her mother said about not talking to strangers.
5. If she had her cell phone turned on she could have kept in touch with her mother and reported back to her about what was happening.

ACTIVITY 10: How good is this story?

Give this story a rating out of 5 for each of these features. (1=Not well developed, 5=Well developed)
Write a short review of this story based on the ratings you have given.

10. How good is this story?

Little Red Riding Hood

Characters = 4

Story Structure = 2

Language Features = 2

Theme = 1

I enjoyed the story "Little Red Riding Hood" but when I started to analyse it closely it only came out with an average rating (9 out of 20).

Characters

The wolf was a well developed character. Because he was the storyteller I learnt a lot about what makes him tick - how hungry he was and how badly treated he had been. The fact that the local council had allowed his habitat to be destroyed without any consideration for his lifestyle made me very sympathetic towards him. The rest of the characters seemed very shallow - Red Riding Hood had no fashion sense and came across as very silly. Didn't she know that she was talking to a wolf? And the woodcutter was a typical macho freak who thinks the solution to everything is to kill it.

Story Structure

This wasn't very clear. I wasn't sure what the problem was. Because it was the wolf's story I guess the fact that he was hungry and mistreated was the problem but there wasn't a very satisfying ending when he got slaughtered by the woodcutter after I had ended up feeling so sorry for him.

Language Features

There was some great imagery used by Grandma (all that "Oh what big bulbous bulging eyes you have" stuff) when she was talking to the wolf but I would have liked a bit more description about how the woodcutter finished off the wolf. Mainly it was pretty flat the way these sort of stories are. The author didn't really paint any pictures for me with his words.

Theme

This was weak and very old fashioned. If it was meant to be "Don't talk to strangers" well I really don't get it. If it was "Listen to your parents" well I think Little Red Riding Hood's mother was a bit lame and irresponsible.

Overall some enjoyable action but the writing could have been much more impressive.

ACTIVITY 10: How good is this story?

A good story will hold the reader's interest because the author has worked cleverly with some or all of the features listed below.

This chart will help you make judgments about the short stories you have read (Follow-up Activity 10). Think about the story you have been studying. Read through the criteria for **WELL DEVELOPED** and **NOT WELL DEVELOPED** and decide on a rating between 1 and 5 for each of these features.

Features	Well Developed (Rate 5)	Not Well Developed (Rate 1)
Characters The people, animals or objects that are the subjects of the story	Essential characters are well rounded - the reader feels they know them well Writer uses all of the following to create characters ♦ description of their appearance ♦ the things they say ♦ the things they do ♦ their inner thoughts	Essential characters are flat - the reader knows little about them Writer uses only 1 of the following to create characters ♦ description of their appearance ♦ the things they say ♦ the things they do ♦ their inner thoughts
Story Structure The sequence of events showing the characters in action . It usually includes • Orientation • Problem • Feelings • Action • Outcome	There is a clear problem The events are all connected The tension rises steadily The outcome is satisfying and believable The writer uses foreshadowing or flashback successfully to make the unfolding of events interesting. Any twists to the ending add to the story interest	The problem is not clear Some events are not connected There is no tension or it is uneven and jerky The outcome is disappointing or doesn't feel right No attempt to raise the interest by putting events out of sequence Twists at the end don't work
Language Features How the writer uses words to tell the story.	Uses lots of similes, metaphors, strong adjectives, nouns, and verbs to create word pictures, humour, and mood.	No similes or metaphors. Adjectives and verbs are not interesting or colourful. Flat - No humour or mood
Theme The idea that holds the story together. It is the reason that the writer wrote the story.	There is a clear theme The story helps the reader to understand the way people think and act	No clear theme The story doesn't say anything about how people think and act